









A LITERARY HISTORY OF ENGLAND



# A LITERARY HISTORY OF ENGLAND

## —VOLUME I—

The Middle Ages (to 1500)

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## —VOLUME II—

The Renaissance (1500-1660)

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## —VOLUME III—

The Restoration and Eighteenth Century (1660-1789)

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## —VOLUME IV—

The Nineteenth Century and After (1789-1939)

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A LITERARY HISTORY OF ENGLAND

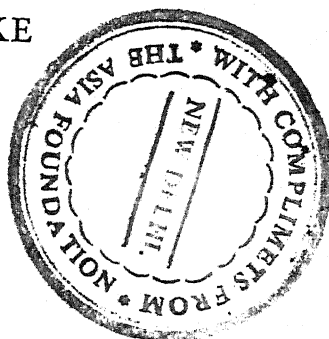
Edited by Albert C. Baugh

— VOLUME II —

THE  
RENAISSANCE  
(1500-1660)

by

TUCKER BROOKE



NEW YORK

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## Preface

The purpose of the work of which the present volume forms a part is to provide a comprehensive history of the literature of England, an account that is at once scholarly and readable, capable of meeting the needs of mature students and of appealing to cultivated readers generally. The extent of English literature is so great that no one can hope to read more than a fraction of it, and the accumulated scholarship—biographical, critical, and historical—by which writers and their works, and the forms and movements and periods of English literature have been interpreted, is so vast that no single scholar can control it. A literary history by one author, a history that is comprehensive and authoritative over the whole field, is next to impossible. Hence, the plan of the present work. A general harmony of treatment among the five contributors, rather than rigid uniformity of method, has seemed desirable, and there is quite properly some difference of emphasis in different sections. It is hoped that the approach to the different periods will seem to be that best suited to the literature concerned. The original plan brought the history to an end with the year 1939 (the outbreak of the Second World War); but delay in publication caused by the war has permitted reference to a few events of a date subsequent to 1939.

Since it is expected that those who read this history or consult it will wish for further acquaintance with the writings and authors discussed, it has been a part of the plan to draw attention, by the generous use of footnotes, to standard editions, to significant biographical and critical works, and to the most important books and articles in which the reader may pursue further the matters that interest him. A few references to very recent publications have been added in proof in an effort to record the present state of scholarly and critical opinion.

It is with deep sorrow that we record the untimely death of Professor Tucker Brooke just as the galley proof of his chapters had begun to arrive. The text of the present volume has been slightly revised by Professor Matthias A. Shaaber but remains essentially the work of Professor Brooke.

A. C. B.





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## List of Abbreviations

<i>AJP</i>	American Journal of Philology
<i>Archiv</i>	Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen
<i>CBEL</i>	Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature (4v, Cambridge, 1941)
<i>CCR</i>	Calendar of the Close Rolls
<i>CFMA</i>	Les Classiques français du moyen âge
<i>CHEL</i>	Cambridge History of English Literature (14v, 1907-17)
<i>CPR</i>	Calendar of the Patent Rolls
<i>DNB</i>	Dictionary of National Biography (63v, 1885-1900, with supplements)
<i>E&amp;S</i>	Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association
<i>EETS</i>	Early English Text Society, Original Series
<i>EETSES</i>	Early English Text Society, Extra Series
<i>EHR</i>	English Historical Review
<i>ELH</i>	<i>ELH</i> , A Journal of English Literary History
<i>EML Series</i>	English Men of Letters Series
<i>Est</i>	Englische Studien
<i>GR</i>	Germanic Review
<i>HLQ</i>	Huntington Library Quarterly
<i>Hist. Litt.</i>	Histoire littéraire de la France (38v, 1733-1941, in progress)
<i>JEGP</i>	Journal of English and Germanic Philology
<i>JHI</i>	Journal of the History of Ideas
<i>LTLS</i>	(London) Times Literary Supplement
<i>MA</i>	Medium Ævum
<i>MLN</i>	Modern Language Notes
<i>MLQ</i>	Modern Language Quarterly
<i>MLR</i>	Modern Language Review
<i>MP</i>	Modern Philology
<i>N&amp;Q</i>	Notes and Queries
<i>PMLA</i>	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America
<i>PQ</i>	Philological Quarterly
<i>RES</i>	Review of English Studies
<i>RLC</i>	Revue de littérature comparée
<i>RR</i>	Romanic Review
<i>SAB</i>	Shakespeare Association Bulletin
<i>SATF</i>	Société des anciens textes français
<i>SP</i>	Studies in Philology
<i>STS</i>	Scottish Text Society



PART I

The Early Tudors  
(1485-1558)



# I

## Links with the Past

The literature of the first Tudor king, Henry VII (1485-1509), was in its main interests retrospective, not forward-looking. Except only in the interlude—where, as we shall see, new viewpoints were being opened up—the writers of this reign offer little promise of the spacious days to come. Instead, their attitude is habitually skeptical of the future and nostalgic toward the past. Satisfactory reasons for this trend of mind are more easily found than is always the case in literary movements. The chief reasons are the Wars of the Roses (1455-1485) and the establishment of the printing-press in England in 1477.

In matters of culture, as in matters of political economy, the chief need after the settlement at Bosworth Field was to rebuild what had been wasted, to renew the links with the past. In this spirit William Caxton<sup>1</sup> (c. 1422-1491) and the three printers who most immediately continued his work—Wynkyn de Worde, Richard Pynson, and Robert Copland—directed their presses. They were not seekers after novelty, but conservators of the old tradition. Caxton's first book, the *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* (printed at Bruges, 1475) is a summary of early Greek fable, from the legendary origins of the pagan gods to the fate of the heroes who fought at Troy.<sup>2</sup>

His earliest publication on English soil, *The Dicts or Sayings of the Philosophers*, is an anthology of epigrammatic wisdom, more Arabic in fact than Greek, but ascribed to the Hellenic sages and wholly in the medieval fashion.<sup>3</sup> Caxton printed also a number of the source books of medieval learning—Boethius in 1478, the encyclopedic *Mirroir of the World* in 1481, the *Golden Legend* in 1483, and several of the most popular romances and courtesy books. In procuring Malory's *Morte Darthur* he was seeking less the contemporary classic which he got than the summary of ancient Arthurian fable which that great work likewise constitutes. For poetry his press gave the readers of 1500 Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, the poets par excellence of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and also such traditional popular verse as is best typified in *A Gest of Robyn Hode*.<sup>4</sup> The first effect

Conservatism of the Early Printers

Caxton's Books

<sup>1</sup> Cf. N. S. Aurner, *Caxton* (1926).

<sup>2</sup> This book had an important history in the next century. It was reprinted three times between 1502 and 1553. Then, with the title changed to *The Ancient History of the Destruction of Troy* and the English slightly modernized by William Fiston, it went through half a dozen more editions, serving as a source for Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*.

<sup>3</sup> For Caxton as a translator see Book. I.

<sup>4</sup> This interesting work was several times printed. The date and printer of the first edition are undetermined; reprints came from the presses of both Wynkyn de Worde and William

of the multiplication of printed books was, therefore, to turn the readers back to the thought and manners of the Middle Ages.

*Chronicles  
of the Past*

Nations that have emerged from the shadow of protracted war do not usually face the future with blithe self-confidence. They are more likely to feel dwarfed by the cataclysm behind them and to look back to the elder sages in the spirit in which Dryden later regarded the Elizabethans: "Theirs was the Giant race before the Flood." So the subjects of Henry VII thought of Edward III and Chaucer, even of Lydgate; and a vivid interest in past history is one of the most enduring, as well as most imaginatively stimulating, of all the literary interests of the Tudor period. A chronicle of England, based on the early *Polychronicon*, had been one of the more popular of Caxton's books (1480).<sup>5</sup> *The New Chronicles of England and France*<sup>6</sup> by Robert Fabyan (d. 1513) was printed by Pynson in 1516 and reprinted with additions three times between that date and 1560, being the first in an august series of Tudor histories which no reading man of the period and few dramatists ever neglected. Fabyan's prose is readably workmanlike and is set off by inserted passages of verse, one of which found its way from his chronicle into Marlowe's *Edward II*.

*Fabyan*

*Hall's  
Chronicle*

Tudor statecraft early turned to its advantage the historical curiosity of the time. Cardinal Morton (d. 1500) is credited with originating the official life of Richard III, which depicted the usurper so luridly that he became the favorite villain of the century, both on and off the stage. In 1505 Henry VII commissioned a learned Italian, Polydore Vergil (c. 1470-c. 1555), to write a grandiose new history of England, which after nearly thirty years of careful research appeared at Basel (1534)<sup>7</sup> with a dedication to Henry VIII. Written in Latin and published (in several editions) abroad, this work affects English literature less directly than do the vernacular histories founded upon it. Of these the first and most distinguished is Edward Hall's *Union of the Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York* (1542), which covered the story from Henry IV's accession to that of Henry VII and gave a Tudor bias and heightened dramatic rhetoric to the events it dealt with. Even to the Elizabethans Hall's manner seemed over-stately; but the chroniclers that succeeded—Richard Grafton (1568), Raphael Holinshed (1577), John Stow (1580)—were content to incorporate large sections of his work in their own more extensive volumes. Shakespeare's political philosophy, his verdicts upon historical personages, and to some extent his style, derive from Hall, and through him from Polydore Vergil.<sup>8</sup>

Copland. Modern editions by J. S. Farmer (*Tudor Facsimile Texts*, 1914) and E. and R. Grabhorn (San Francisco, 1932).

<sup>5</sup> It was reprinted in 1482.

<sup>6</sup> This title is from the colophon of the edition of 1516. Fabyan's original title seems to have been "The Concordance of Histories."

<sup>7</sup> *Polydori Vergilii Urbinae Anglicae Historiae libri xxvi*. A sixteenth-century English translation was edited by Sir H. Ellis for the Camden Society (1844, 1846). See also D. Hay, "The Manuscript of Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia*," *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, LIX (1939), 240-251.

<sup>8</sup> See W. G. Zeeveld, "The Influence of Hall on Shakespeare's English Historical Plays," *ELH*, III (1936), 317-353. The chronicles of Hall, Grafton, and Holinshed were reprinted (1807-1809) in nine large volumes under the editorship of Sir H. Ellis. Stow's popular and



English and French history are in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries not easily detachable. The chronicle of "unfruitful Fabyan"—as the *Mirror for Magistrates* called him—handled events in the two countries in simple alternation. A nicer balance is found in the great work of Jean Froissart, greatly translated about 1520<sup>9</sup> by John Bourchier, Lord Berners. It is first in the eminent line of Tudor translations, standing as a classic in its own right and as a memorial of the ardor with which the early sixteenth century turned back to the fourteenth. Berners follows close in the footsteps of Caxton in the rendering of Froissart and also in his next translation, that of the French prose romance of *Huon of Bordeaux*,<sup>10</sup> (c. 1530) which introduced the English public to Oberon, King of Fairies. Both books proved rich mines for the Elizabethan dramatists. These were followed by Lord Berners' last important work, *The Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius*, translated through a French version from the Spanish of Antonio de Guevara and printed in 1535. Here, for the first time, one observes some concession to the special interests of the Renaissance and an approach, though still hesitant, to the sixteenth-century linguistic habits out of which Euphuism grew.<sup>11</sup>

Froissart  
and Berners

Though the kingdoms of England and Scotland were distinct, literary relations were close in the sixteenth century and the dialects of the two countries were not divided by the border. The most vigorous English poetry of the generation following Henry VII's accession was written by Scots who had trained themselves in the Chaucerian tradition; and the best of these is William Dunbar<sup>12</sup> (c. 1460-c. 1520). Freshness, metrical facility, and variety are Dunbar's great merits. In *The Golden Targe*, of about 1503, he handles the exacting nine-line stanza of Chaucer's *Womanly Noblesse* and *Anelida and Arcite* (aabaabbab) with real mastery through nearly three hundred lines which depict the poet asleep in a May morning on "Flora's mantle," and portray the dream visions of a ship filled with a hundred allegorical ladies and of King Cupid's court, where Reason with his golden shield attempts, though ineffectually, to guard the sleeper from the arrows of love. The conclusion is an invocation to "moral Gower" and "Lydgate laureate," but especially to "reverend Chaucer, rose of rhetors all," concerning whom the poet demands

The Scot-  
tish School

William  
Dunbar,  
The Golden  
Targe

Was thou not of our English all the light,  
Surmounting every tongue terrestrial  
Als far as May's morrow does midnight?

frequently expanded chronicle went through many editions between 1565 and 1632, but has not been edited in modern times.

<sup>9</sup> Printed, 1523-25, by Pynson; ed. W. P. Ker (6v, 1901-3) and reprinted (8v, Oxford, 1927-8).

<sup>10</sup> Edited by S. L. Lee (4v, 1882-87; *EETSES*, 40, 41, 43, 50) and in modernized form by R. Steele (1895).

<sup>11</sup> See J. M. Galvez, *Guevara in England* (Berlin, 1916), which includes the text of Berners' *Golden Book*.

<sup>12</sup> See R. A. Taylor, *Dunbar* (1932), and P. H. Nichols, "William Dunbar as a Scottish Lydgatian," *PMLA*, XLVI (1931), 214-224. *The Poems of William Dunbar* are edited by John Small (*Scottish Text Soc.*, 3v, 1893) and in more recent texts by H. B. Baildon (1907) and W. M. Mackenzie (Edinburgh, 1932).

For the English as well as the Scottish court Dunbar exercised some of the functions of a poet laureate. In 1501 he accompanied the mission that arranged the marriage of Henry VII's daughter Margaret to James IV of Scotland. On this occasion he wrote for the Lord Mayor of London the delightful ballade in which each stanza ends with the refrain, "London, thou art the flower of cities all," and doubtless the verses "written at Oxinfurde," in which with Caledonian soberness he admonishes the clerks of that university,

If to your saws your dedes contrair be,  
Your maist accuser salbe your own cunning:  
A perilous sickness is vain prosperity.

The Thistle and the Rose For the royal wedding mentioned above he composed in twenty-seven rime-royal stanzas the allegory of *The Thistle and the Rose* (dated May 9, 1503), in which Dame Nature marshals all the denizens of her garden and, after awarding the rule of her beasts to the lion and her birds to the eagle, gives the preëminence among plants to the Scottish thistle and the English rose.

*Light Poems of Dunbar* This is all convincingly, and not too imitatively, Chaucerian or Lydgatian. No less so are Dunbar's satirical and realistic poems. The obscene self-revelation of *The Two Married Women and the Widow* (in unriming alliterative verse) exceeds that of the Wife of Bath. Dunbar knew how to make the most poetically of the devil and the seven deadly sins; and also of the ballad rhythm and the repeated refrain, as in his famous *Lament for the Makars* (printed, 1508):

He [i.e., Death] has done piteously devour  
The noble Chaucer, of makers flower,  
The monk of Bury, and Gower, all three;  
*Timor mortis conturbat me;*

or in his flippant ballade on the blackamoor girl:

Long have I made [i.e., rimed] of ladies white;  
Now of one black I will indite,  
That landed forth of the last ships.  
How fain would I describe perfite [describe perfectly]  
My lady with the mickle lips.

Liveliness is the keynote of all Dunbar's work. Even in his allegories the woods are noisy with the din of birdsong, and the landscape splashed with exuberant color. In *The Golden Targe* "the skies rang for shouting of the larks," and

The crystal air, the sapphire firmament,  
The ruby skies of the orient  
Cast berial [pale green] beams on emerald boughes green . . .  
With purple, azure, gold and gules gent.

Till we reach Robert Burns we shall hardly find a poet more animated than Dunbar in his dealings with nature and human nature.

Gavin Douglas<sup>13</sup> (1475-1522), son of the famous Earl of Angus known as "Bell-the-cat" and uncle by marriage of Queen Margaret of Scotland, for whom Dunbar wrote *The Thistle and the Rose*, was an M.A. of St. Andrews University and Bishop of Dunkeld. He died in London in 1522. Douglas is one of the most redundant of poets, but he is a real poet and an allegorist of remarkable ingenuity. His longest, and apparently earliest, independent poem, *The Palace of Honor* (1501), fills eighty pages of intricate nine-line stanzas<sup>14</sup> and hardly yields in imaginative merit to any of the other offspring of the *Romance of the Rose*. On a May morning the author enters a garden of pleasance which Dame Flora has superabundantly decorated. The sun rises and seems to evoke from nature a hymn of praise so overpowering that the poet falls fainting and imagines himself in an antithetical place, a bleak forest by "a hideous flood with grisly fish." Terrified in "this wilderness abominable and waste," he laments Fortune's inconstancy and creeps for shelter into a hollow tree, whence he observes the passage of various mythological companies en route to the Palace of Honor: first that of the Queen of Sapience, Minerva; then Diana and her depleted band of maidens; finally Venus in a wonderful chariot, with Cupid, Mars, and many lovers. The last spectacle so moves the concealed poet that he sings a sort of "enuég" or hymn of hate against inconstant love, Cupid, false Venus, and all their court, with the result that he is dragged out and threatened with dire punishment as the first part of the poem ends. In his extremity a new company arrives, consisting of Muses and poets, from Homer, Virgil, and Ovid to "Great Kennedy<sup>15</sup> and Dunbar yet undead." Calliope, the epic Muse, secures the poet's release, and under the guidance of a sweet nymph he makes, in Part II, a wonderful journey through all the places of classic geography, with special attention to the fountain of Hippocrene, of which, however, he is unable to drink a drop by reason of the crowd around it. In Part III he reaches the Palace of Honor, in the description of which Douglas shows much vividness and poetic resourcefulness, as he does in his conclusion: following his guide over a fallen tree that spans the moat of the Palace, the hero falls into the water and awakes to find himself in the garden in which the poem opened.

Gavin  
DouglasThe Palace  
of Honor

*King Heart*, in the "Monk's Tale" eight-line stanza, is half as long as *The Palace of Honor*, and seems to be a maturer poem. It is Douglas's *Everyman*, an allegory of man's life and death. The hero, a young king, dwells, like the heart in man's body, in his "comely castle strong," served by the five senses and a countless train of personified impulses. When the lady of a neighboring castle, Dame Plesance, rides by to hunt, her retinue of attendant emotions captivates the servants of King Heart. This leads to war, in which the king is wounded by Beauty and imprisoned; but Pity enables him to turn the tables, and the first canto ends with the mating of the two principals, who

King Heart

<sup>13</sup> For the text see John Small, *The Poetical Works of Gavin Douglas* (4v, Edinburgh, 1874).

<sup>14</sup> In the first two books the rime scheme is *aabaabbab*, as in Dunbar's *Golden Targe*. In the third book it is *aabaabbcc*.

<sup>15</sup> Walter Kennedy, antagonist of Dunbar in the famous *Flying*.

in the course of the story have called upon the services of some one hundred abstract agents. Canto II shows Age arriving, along with Conscience, Disease, and many more. It shows the departure of King Heart's old supporters and concludes with his testament, in which in ballad fashion he remembers his friends and foes. This is a grim piece; it handles one of the tritest allegories without becoming merely ingenious or stereotyped.<sup>16</sup>

*Douglas's  
Translation  
of Virgil*

Douglas's translation of the *Æneid* in riming couplets (1512-1513, printed 1553) was his greatest and most famous labor. Preceded among English renderings only by Caxton's *Eneydos*, towards which Douglas is justly scornful, it has the virtues of accuracy, clearness, and, save for the dialect, readability. Naturally the copious Scot was no man to emulate Virgil's great compactness; he normally requires two lines for each line of the Latin, but the result is seldom incorrect or heavy. This translation was embellished with an original "prologue" before each book, constituting a set of thirteen<sup>17</sup> poems on various subjects, in nine different metres,<sup>18</sup> and amounting in the aggregate to nearly 2500 lines. This is the length of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, a work which Douglas's prologues suggest in their various concern with moral criticism and natural beauty and with experiments in style and language. The differences that one sees in Spenser's eclogues are mainly the differences that came in with the humanist tradition. The eighth prologue, unreadable today without a glossary, is sheer medievalism; it is a dream vision after Langland's manner, expressed in ultra-alliterative language and woven into very complicated thirteen-line stanzas. On the other hand, the seventh, twelfth, and thirteenth, written in simple couplets, deal with natural description of the seasons of winter, spring, and summer, respectively, and are no unworthy progenitors of James Thomson's *Seasons*. They were long popular in Scotland and established a style.

*Sir David  
Lindsay*

The last important poet of this group, Sir David Lindsay<sup>19</sup> (c. 1485-1555) has had his fame brightened by Sir Walter Scott.

In the glances of his eye  
A penetrating, keen, and sly  
Expression found its home;  
The flash of that satiric rage  
Which, bursting on the early stage,  
Branded the vices of the age,  
And broke the keys of Rome.

<sup>16</sup> For an admirable discussion of Douglas's allegorical poems see C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford, 1936), pp. 287-292.

<sup>17</sup> Douglas translated not only the twelve books of Virgil, but the thirteenth book added by Mapheus Vegius in the fifteenth century.

<sup>18</sup> Couplets, five-line stanza, six-line stanza, rime royal, two eight-line stanzas, two nine-line stanzas (as in *The Palace of Honor*), thirteen-line stanza.

<sup>19</sup> Lindsay's works have been admirably edited for the Scottish Text Society by Douglas Hamer (4v, 1931-36). See also D. Hamer, "The Bibliography of Sir David Lindsay," *Library*, x (1929), 1-35. W. Murison's *Sir David Lyndsay, Poet and Satirist* (Cambridge, 1938) contains a good brief life and estimate.

Still is thy name in high account,  
 And still thy verse has charms,  
 Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,  
 Lord Lion King-at-arms!

Thus he enters Scott's *Marmion*. Born a few years before 1490, Lindsay belongs to a somewhat younger generation than the Scottish poets we have just discussed, but represents many of the same traditions. Appointed "master usher" to the infant king, James V (Scott's Fitz-James), and later engaged in negotiations for his marriage, he addressed to the boy a number of his poems. One, the *Answer to the King's Flyting*, is more graphic than decent; another, *The Complaint and Public Confession of the King's Old Hound called Bagshe*, which has been called "the first dog-poem in English literature,"<sup>20</sup> is a moral on court life and has an affinity with the *Twa Dogs* of Burns. *The Dream of Sir David Lindsay*, which has been ascribed to the year 1528, and may be his earliest extant poem, is longer and more important: it rings ingenious changes on the old convention of the dream allegory. Unable to sleep in a snowy January night, Lindsay dresses himself in cloak, hood, double shoes, and mittens and goes out at sunrise. He meets Dame Flora, deprived of all her May sweetness, hears the complaints of the birds, and finds a shelter in a rock, where he thinks to write in rime "some merry matter of Antiquity." He falls asleep. In a vision Remembrance salutes him, and in a passage anticipatory of Sackville's *Induction* takes him to Hell, where he sees popes, emperors, and especially prelates, whose faults are described, and princes, lords, and ladies suffering for their sins. They next visit Purgatory and the Limbo, and ascend through the four elements and the spheres of the seven planets and fixed stars to the crystalline heaven, which is fully described. Remembrance will not permit him to remain there, but at his request she describes the Earth, the Earthly Paradise, and finally the realm of Scotland. When the poet asks how a country so well endowed by nature and so superior in its population can be so poor, she puts the blame chiefly on the princes and governors:

Lindsay's  
 Dream

the negligence  
 Of our infatuate headis insolent  
 Is cause of all this realm's indigence.

They meet John the Commonweal,<sup>21</sup> who is everywhere ill treated and sums up his miseries in the proverb: "Woe to the realm that has over-young a king!" Remembrance brings the author back to the rock where he fell asleep. A ship approaching harbor awakes him with its signal cannon, and he adds the "Exhortation to the King's Grace," urging moral conduct upon him.

<sup>20</sup> Hamer, *Works*, iv, p. xxii.

<sup>21</sup> This character has an important part also in Lindsay's play, *A Satire of the Three Estates*. Cf. below, ch. v.

His Com-  
plaint

*The Complaint of Sir David Lindsay* was written a year or two later in happier days. The formal rime royal of the *Dream* is here changed to rather jocular tetrameter, and Lindsay couches his complaint under good-tempered irony.

Seand [seeing] that I am not regardit,  
Nor with my brether in court rewardit,

he reminds the King (as he had in the earlier poem also) of his unrequited service from the day of the latter's birth and of the bad influence of the self-seekers (headed by the Earl of Angus) who had lately controlled his royal youth:

They became rich, I you assure,  
But aye the prince remainit poor.

Now these have all been banished and the kingdom is purified:

So is there naught, I understand,  
Without good order in this land,  
Except the spirituality.

It is time for the King to put the latter in order, and to lend Lindsay "of gold ane thousand pound or tway," which he will repay "when kirkmen yearns no dignity," or at some other highly improbable occasion.

The Testa-  
ment of the  
King's  
Papingo

*The Testament and Complaint of Our Sovereign Lord's Papingo* (1530) is a bird poem which suggests both the *Speak, Parrot!* and the *Philip Sparrow* of Skelton, the one in its political vehemence, the other in pathos. James V's parrot or "papingo," of which Lindsay was the keeper, fell one day from a tree and was mortally wounded. After upbraiding the inconstancy of fortune, she sends a message to the young King, bidding him remember that a ruler, being himself the servant of God, should follow justice and seek good reputation; and another message to the courtiers, bidding them profit by the tragic lessons of Scottish, as well as French and English, history. The last section of the poem is a grim satire on the falsity of churchmen. About the dying parrot three birds of prey assemble: the magpie, the raven, and the kite, representing themselves as a canon regular, a black monk, and a friar respectively. When they challenge her to justify the distrust in which she holds them, the parrot has occasion to discuss at length the Donation of Constantine, whereby the Church has grown rich and sensual, the universal banishment of chastity, the lack of learned preaching, and in general the clerical faults that Lindsay develops with yet more copiousness in his *Satire of the Three Estates*. At the end of a thousand lines the parrot makes her will, dies, and is at once devoured by her false confessors. The introduction of this poem, differentiated from the rest (which is in rime royal) by the use of a nine-line stanza, contains a notable beadroll of poets, beginning as usual with "Chawceir, Goweir, and Lidgate laureate," and paying special honor to Gavin Douglas.

In Sir David Lindsay the unchecked current of medieval poetry flows with hardly a trace of humanist transition into the high tide of the Reformation. This is most impressive in his longest poem, *A Dialogue betwixt Experience and a Courtier of the Miserable Estate of the World*,<sup>22</sup> to which an internal reference allows us to fix the late date of 1553.<sup>23</sup> Here the poetic form and spirit seem to be pure Gower, while the poet's critical ideas are those of John Knox and the Covenanters. The scope is Gothic and enormous, from Creation to Judgment Day, with particular emphasis on the four historical monarchies (Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome) and the "fifth monarchy" of the Pope. The verse is mainly the tetrameter couplet of the *Confessio Amantis*, seldom employed since the fourteenth century with such force and freedom. On a May morning the Courtier hears the birds hail the rising of the sun and meets an old man, Experience, who recounts to him the history of the world in a dialogue broken at the important points by "exclamations" and "descriptions" in stanzaic verse. The avowed sources are mainly the masters recognized in Gower's age: Orosius, Diodorus Siculus, Eusebius, Josephus, Boccaccio; but while industriously exploiting their narratives, Lindsay attacks with fury the evils of his own time: idolatry, war, adultery, clerical celibacy, and clerical rapacity.

Lindsay's  
Dialogue

The effect of this forceful poem is enhanced by contrast. The fulminations at the wickedness of Edinburgh are set against such passages of old-fashioned piety as these from the long description of the Judgment:

The Fathers of the Auld Testament,  
 Quhilk were to God obedient,  
 Father Adam shall them convoy,  
 With Abell, Seth, Enoch, and Noye [Noah],  
 Abraham, with his faithful warks,  
 With all the prudent Patriarchs.  
 John the Baptist there shall compeir [appear],  
 The principal and last messenger,  
 Quhilk come but half a year afore  
 The coming of that king of glorie [glory]. . . .  
 Then, with one rair [roar], the earth shall rive,  
 And swallow them, both man and wive.  
 Then shall those creatures forlorn  
 Warie [curse] the hour that they were born,  
 With many yammer, yewt [cry], and yell,  
 From time they feel the flamis fell  
 Upon their tender bodies bite,  
 Quhose [Whose] torment shall be infinite;<sup>24</sup>

or this stanza of Lindsay's conclusion, in which the day ends and untainted nature reasserts herself:

<sup>22</sup> Usually known as *The Monarche*, or *Monarchie*.

<sup>23</sup> Line 5301. The colophon dates it 1552.

<sup>24</sup> Lines 5644-53, 5998-6005.



The blissful birdis bounis [betake themselves] to the trees,  
 And ceases of their heavenly harmonies:  
 The corncrake in the croft, I hear her cry;  
 The bat, the owlet, feeble of their eyes,  
 For their pastime now in the evening flies;  
 The nightingale, with mirthful melody,  
 Her natural notis pierceth through the sky,  
 Till [to] Cynthia makand [making] her observance,  
 Quhilk on the night does take her dalliance.<sup>25</sup>

Two biographical poems, dating from the latter years of Lindsay's life, deserve attention. The "Tragedy" of Cardinal Beaton, in professed imitation of Boccaccio's *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, relates the story of this Scottish counterpart of Wolsey to his murder in 1546 and adds warnings for prelates and princes. It is in rime royal and in the form of monologue by a ghostly visitant, thus anticipating the method of *The Mirror for Magistrates*. In *The History of a Noble and Valiant Squire*, William Meldrum, on the other hand, Lindsay handles the life of a contemporary soldier of fortune, who died in 1550, in the form and manner of the *chanson de geste*. No reformatory ethics or anticlerical satire appears in this attractive, if extended, work. The verse is the tetrameter couplet of *The Lady of the Lake*, and the substance is the pagan doughtiness of the valiant squire, on land and sea, in war and love.

Stephen  
Hawes

Stephen Hawes (1474-1523) had been educated at Oxford and was one of the grooms of the chamber to Henry VII, to whom he dedicated, in the nineteenth year of the King's reign (1503-4), *The Example of Virtue* and, in the twenty-first year (1505-6), *The Pastime of Pleasure*.<sup>26</sup> The earlier work, though it stretches out through three hundred stanzas of rime royal verse, is of very slight importance: it is a homiletic tract encased in the thinnest of allegorical shells. *The Pastime of Pleasure* was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1509 and again in 1517 in editions rather handsomely adorned with woodcuts and divided, for the benefit of the casual reader, into forty-six chapters. There seems to have been no further demand for it till the beginning of Queen Mary's reign, when three editions were issued in two years (1554, 1555), a testimony, one would suppose, to its reactionary trend. The next printing was in 1831, under the editorship of Robert Southey, and the poem has since been food for the antiquary. In truth, Hawes enters the Renaissance scene rather in the posture of Spenser's Sir Trevisan: his eye was backward cast.

The Pas-  
time of  
Pleasure

The title of *The Pastime of Pleasure* raises expectations which it could probably not have satisfied in any age, and it suffers from faults that explain the author's clear preference of Lydgate to Chaucer as a model, the medieval faults of all-inclusiveness and verbosity. Hawes's intention seems to have

<sup>25</sup> Lines 6312-20.

<sup>26</sup> Hawes' *Pastime of Pleasure* is well edited by W. E. Mead (1928; *EETS*, 173). Concerning a slightly later poem by Hawes, *The Comfort of Lovers* (c. 1510) see R. D. Cornelius, *The Castell of Pleasure by Wm. Nevill* (1930; *EETS*, 179), pp. 26-29.



been to give his reader everything that the bygone centuries had to offer. Love allegory is here in the really charming romance of *Grand Amour* and *La Belle Pucelle*. Scholastic erudition fills a vast number of pages which treat the trivium and quadrivium, with special attention to the art of rhetoric. Giant-fighting is conspicuous; the hero slays a three-headed giant twelve feet high, then one with seven heads and fifteen feet of stature, and finally a wonderful monster created out of the seven metals by a wicked enchantress. The fabliau element is here in the coarsely amusing episode of Godfrey Gobylyve,<sup>27</sup> and the macabre element in the account of the hero's death and the remarks of the Seven Deadly Sins over his "vile carcass," accentuated by two grisly woodcuts.

Opinion concerning this poem is not likely to be fair. The first risk is that it will not be read; it consists of nearly six thousand lines of lame rime royal. The second risk is that those who read it will be beguiled into overpraise by the sense of their own virtue and by the isolated charms of some of its portions. The writer confesses that the wan heroine seems very pleasant, particularly in the courtship scene (lines 1989-2408). The absurd greyhounds, Governance and Grace, who accompany the hero from tower to tower and from giant to giant, grow upon one; and there are passages which delight by their soundly human prosiness, like the stanza at the opening of chapter 33:

Up I arose and did make me ready,  
 For I thought long unto my journey's end;  
 My greyhounds leapt on me right merrily,  
 To cheer me forward they did condescend;  
 And the three ladies, my cheer to amend,  
 A goodly breakfast did for me ordain:  
 They were right glad the giant was slain.

Passages have sometimes been cited to prove that Hawes was a poet. A work which speaks so largely of love, death, fame, time, and eternity could hardly fail to have some quotable sentiments, and this one has many; but the gems gain part of their effect from the unlikely contexts in which they are discovered, and the limp of Hawes's verse, like Charles Lamb's stammer, gives his good things a slightly illegitimate emphasis. The best practice would be for the modern reader to approach *The Pastime of Pleasure* in the spirit in which the printer recommended it to the reader of 1554, as a poem "containing and treating upon the seven liberal sciences and the whole course of man's life." Thus he would find it a compendious statement of what the Tudor gentleman was supposed to retain out of the mental and moral gatherings of the Middle Ages, and the romantic or humorous gildings would be pleasantly added unto him.

<sup>27</sup> In this section of the poem couplets replace the rime royal, and the southern dialect is employed.

## II

### The New Learning

#### *The Introduction of Humanism*

There is still dispute concerning the processes by which medieval habits of thought were in England supplanted by the newer attitude and discipline to which the terms *Renaissance* and *Humanism* are applied.<sup>1</sup> English humanism was a matter of thought and training more than of spontaneous emotion, of borrowing from Italy, France, and Germany more than of native impulse. The movement affected English literature, narrowly considered, rather slowly and rather indirectly. It came in by two doors: the court and the university.

#### *Early Humanists in England*

As early as 1437 an Italian schoolmaster, Tito Livio Frulovisi, was living in England in the service of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. He wrote a Latin life of the Duke's brother, Henry V, and left seven Latin plays, in partially classic style, which have been recently edited from the unique manuscript in St. John's College, Cambridge.<sup>2</sup> This is but a typical example. The Wars of the Roses did not quite break the connection with Renaissance Italy,<sup>3</sup> but it was not till after Henry VII's accession in 1485 that humanists appeared significantly at the English court. In this reign Adrian of Castello, Giovanni and Silvestro Gigli were all rewarded with English bishoprics for their public service as Latin orators and letter writers. Pietro Carmeliano was appointed Latin Secretary and dignified with the title of poet laureate. Another "poet laureate," Bernard André, a French scholar from Toulouse, combined courtly duties and the instruction of the King's son with classical lectures at Oxford.<sup>4</sup>

These exponents of the Italian and French Renaissance served the English

<sup>1</sup> Neither word appears to have been so used in England till the nineteenth century; but *humanist* began to be employed at the end of the sixteenth for a scholar in worldly learning, usually in direct opposition to *divine*. Only in the eighteenth century did *humanist* commonly have the sense in which we use it: a scholar devoted to the study of Greek and Latin antiquity, either for aesthetic, historical, or theological purposes. Johnson's Dictionary (1755) defines *Humanist* as "a philologer, a grammarian; a term used in the schools of Scotland." For an admirable general discussion see Douglas Bush, *The Renaissance and English Humanism* (Toronto, 1939); also L. E. Elliott-Binns, *England and the New Learning* (1937), and Wallace K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance* (1940). V. de Sola Pinto *The English Renaissance, 1510-1688* (1938), covers a wide field in brief compass, with excellent historical chapters and useful bibliographies.

<sup>2</sup> C. W. Previt -Orton, *Opera hactenus inedita T. Livii de Frulovisiis de Ferraria* (Cambridge, 1932).

<sup>3</sup> See Elizabeth C. Wright, "Continuity in Fifteenth-Century English Humanism," *PMLA*, LI (1936), 370-376; Roberto Weiss, "Humanism in Oxford," *LTLS*, xxxvi (Jan. 9, 1937), 28, and *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1941); A. Hyma, "The Continental Origins of English Humanism," *HLQ*, iv (1940), 1-26.

<sup>4</sup> See William Nelson, "The Scholars of Henry VII," in *John Skelton, Laureate* (1939), pp. 4-39.

court by raising the quality of the official state papers, substituting the language of Cicero for the more barbarous Latin of the Middle Ages, and by producing elegant Latin verses on public occasions. At Oxford humanism bit deeper, concerning itself particularly with the encouragement of Greek learning and the development of sounder methods in the study of philosophy, medicine, and divinity. The eldest of the Oxford humanists was William Grocyn<sup>5</sup> (c. 1446-1519), who seems to have acquired some knowledge of Greek from Cornelio Vitelli at New College, and in 1488, during the last years of Lorenzo the Magnificent, went to Florence for the improvement of his studies under the matchless Politian. He became the friend and benefactor of Erasmus (1466-1536), who loses no opportunity of praising his learning,<sup>6</sup> but he has bequeathed us no writings except a Latin letter to the famous Venetian printer, Aldus Manutius.<sup>7</sup>

William  
Grocyn

Grocyn's scholarship focused upon theology; he lectured at Oxford on Greek and divinity and at one time held four church livings concurrently, though his generosity to students was so great that he died a poor man.<sup>8</sup> His pupil and lifelong friend, Thomas Linacre (1460-1524), who had been his companion also at Politian's lectures in Florence and was his executor, directed his own studies particularly to medicine. He translated several of the Greek writings of Galen into useful and polished Latin, and won lasting fame by founding the Royal College of Physicians in London, of which he was the first president. Linacre's interest in linguistic scholarship is evidenced by several monographs on Latin grammar, one of which, *Rudimenta Grammatices*,<sup>9</sup> originally composed in English for the use of Princess Mary, was later translated into Latin by the great Scot, George Buchanan. These bring Linacre into close connection with two younger Oxford humanists, John Colet<sup>10</sup> (1466-1519) and William Lyly (c. 1468-1523), the latter Grocyn's godson and grandfather of the author of *Euphues*.<sup>11</sup>

Thomas  
Linacre

Colet and Lyly likewise, after absorbing the learning available in Oxford, perfected their scholarship in Italy, Colet studying also in France, and Lyly pressing as far as Rhodes in search of remnants of Greek culture. On his return Colet entered upon a clerical career of great success, first as a lecturer on Pauline theology at Oxford and then as Dean of St. Paul's, London. Having inherited a large fortune from his father, who had been twice Lord

John Colet

<sup>5</sup> See Montagu Burrows, "Memoir of William Grocyn," *Collectanea*, 2nd Series (Oxford, 1890), pp. 332-380.

<sup>6</sup> Erasmus spoke of Grocyn as "holding the first place among the many learned men of Britain," and as "the patron and preceptor of us all."

<sup>7</sup> Aldus printed this in his edition of Linacre's translation of Proclus, 1499.

<sup>8</sup> Grocyn left a library of 105 printed books and 17 manuscripts, mainly theological and classical, of which Linacre made a catalogue.

<sup>9</sup> Linacre had earlier prepared a grammar for the use of Colet's new school, St. Paul's, but Colet declined it as too difficult. Cf. F. Seeböhm, *The Oxford Reformers of 1498* (1867), p. 148.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Sir J. A. R. Marriott, *The Life of John Colet* (1933); Kathleen C. MacKenzie, "John Colet of Oxford," *Dalhousie Rev.*, xxi (1941), 15-28.

<sup>11</sup> For an interesting account of William Lyly and his family see A. Feuillerat, "Une famille d'érudits au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *John Lyly* (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 3-24. See also M. B. Stewart, "William Lyly's Contribution to Classical Study," *Classical Jour.*, xxxiii (1938), 217-225.

William  
Lyly

Mayor of London, Colet devoted it to the endowment of St. Paul's School in the center of the city, to serve as a model and seedbed of the new learning (1510). William Lyly was the first headmaster, and John Milton, in later years, was probably the greatest tribute to the efficacy of its education. Colet, Lyly, and Erasmus collaborated on the constitution of the school and also on a new Latin grammar for the pupils, which was to prove the most influential of all English textbooks.<sup>12</sup>

The interplay of influences among these humanists is illustrated in the following account of the genesis of one part of the book:

The Latin syntax was first drawn up by Lyly, and then sent by Dean Colet to Erasmus for his review, who so far altered it that neither of them afterwards thought he had a right to own it; for which reason it was at first published without any author's name, and only an epistle of Colet prefixed to it, in which his affectionate concern for the success of his new school and great generosity in founding it are finely expressed.<sup>13</sup>

Lyly's  
Grammar

The bibliography of this remarkable book will doubtless never be precisely traced. The earliest edition may date from 1513, the latest from 1858. Sections of it bore different titles, and revisions were made from one generation to another for over three centuries. It was most commonly referred to as Lyly's Grammar, but sometimes as "Paul's Accidence," from the name of the school for which it was first made; later editions called it the Eton Grammar. Almost countless editions can be found, but it is probable that many others were thumbed to pieces without leaving a surviving copy.<sup>14</sup> One of the pedagogical methods employed in the book was to make the rules of grammar unforgettable by concentrating them in mnemonic passages of hexameter, and the opening words of some of these—as "in praesenti," "propria quae maribus," etc.—as well as some of the illustrative classical quotations, became a jargon which Shakespeare and his contemporaries never tired of. The address to his pupils, which Lyly wrote in elegiac couplets as an introduction ("Qui mihi discipulus, puer, es, cupis atque doceri," etc.), was probably the most widely known of all sixteenth-century poems, and it does indeed give a charming picture of what the good Tudor schoolboy was supposed to be. Less pleasant, but no less typical of Renaissance manners, was the grammarians' war that followed. Robert Whittinton of Magdalen College, Oxford, which was also Lyly's college and probably Colet's, had himself published five or six very popular grammatical treatises<sup>15</sup> between 1512 and 1519, and had been designated "laureate in grammar." When Whittinton carried his rivalry to the point of affixing denunciatory Latin

<sup>12</sup> A great wealth of information concerning the sixteenth-century school system in England, springing ultimately from Erasmus and the St. Paul's establishment, will be found in T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke* (2v, Urbana, 1944).

<sup>13</sup> John Ward, preface to the edition of 1789, *A Short Introduction of Grammar*, pp. iv, v.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Rev. Vincent J. Flynn, *The Life and Works of William Lyly* (unpublished dissertation, University of Chicago, 1939), and "The Grammatical Writings of William Lyly," *Papers of the Bibl. Soc. of America*, xxxvii (1943). 85-113.

<sup>15</sup> These went through so many editions that they make up nearly 140 entries in the Short-Title Catalogue.

verses against Lyly (signed with the pseudonym "Bossus") to the door of Lyly's own school, William Horman, Vice-Provost of Eton, replied by attacking Whittinton in a work called *Antibossicon* (1521), which he dedicated to Lyly. Henry VIII ultimately settled the matter by decreeing that Lyly's grammar should be the one used in schools.<sup>16</sup>

Grocyn, Linacre, Colet, and Lyly—the "Oxford Reformers" as they have been called<sup>17</sup>—produced no pure literature, but they produced the matrix in which it was molded. They were all saintly souls, living abstemious lives, possessing an incredible ardor for learning and extraordinary powers of administration. The thing they did was to gather from the tainted luxuriance of late-Renaissance Florence, in the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent, the seeds of humanistic piety and develop them into more than their pristine purity. They wrote little of themselves or of each other; we know them best by the institutions they created and the pupils, such as More, that they trained up. But their friend Erasmus, who came to England first in 1497, has immortalized them in his letters. Of the greatest of them, Colet, he has left a long character sketch<sup>18</sup> (dated 1519) which ranks with the classic brief lives of Izaak Walton. A sentence of Erasmus, often quoted, is their best epitaph:

*The  
"Oxford  
Reformers"*

*Erasmus*

When I listen to my friend Colet, I seem to be listening to Plato himself. Who does not admire in Grocyn the perfection of his training? What can be more acute, more profound, or more refined, than the judgment of Linacre? What has nature ever fashioned softer, or sweeter, or pleasanter than the disposition of Thomas More?<sup>19</sup>

And the ironic *Praise of Folly*,<sup>20</sup> which Erasmus wrote at More's house in 1510, is the best expression in literature of the attack that the Oxford reformers were making upon the medieval system.

*The Praise  
of Folly*

The great organizer of the learning that the English humanists had gathered was Sir Thomas Elyot (c. 1490-1548), whom Nashe lauded half a century later as "a man of famous memory" and as one whose elegance in adapting the classics "did sever itself from all equals, although Sir Thomas More with his comical wit at that instant was not altogether idle."<sup>21</sup> Elyot's first and most important work, "the first fruits of my study," as he called it, is *The Book Named the Governor*, printed in 1531 with a dedication to King Henry VIII, whose almost precise coeval Elyot was in date of birth and span of life. It brought the author immediate and lasting honor; by 1580 it had gone through eight editions, and within a few months of its appearance Elyot was named to the high office of ambassador to the Emperor Charles V.

*Sir Thomas  
Elyot*

*The  
Governor*

The aim of *The Governor*, the King is told, is "to describe in our vulgar

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Leicester Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae* (1940), pp. 10-19.

<sup>17</sup> Frederic Seebohm's classic book, *The Oxford Reformers of 1498*, deals mainly with Colet, Erasmus, and More. Though published in 1867, it is still a work of importance.

<sup>18</sup> Translated by J. H. Lupton, *The Lives of Jehan Vitrier and John Colet* (1883).

<sup>19</sup> Letter of Dec. 5, 1499.

<sup>20</sup> Written in Latin with the title *Moriae Encomium*. An English translation by Sir Thomas Chaloner was printed in 1549. Best modern translation and commentary by H. H. Hudson (Princeton, 1941).

<sup>21</sup> *Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. McKerrow, I. 39; III. 317.

tongue the form of a just public weal, which matter I have gathered as well of the sayings of most noble authors (Greeks and Latins) as by mine own experience," and it "treateth of the education of them that hereafter may be deemed worthy to be governors of the public weal under your highness."<sup>22</sup> There could hardly be a better statement of the ideal toward which the English universities since Elyot's time have most commonly aimed: the training of leaders of the nation through the study particularly of ancient history and philosophy. Elyot, so far as is known, had not been educated at either university, but rather, as he says, "continually trained in some daily affairs of the common weal...almost from my childhood,"—that is, in clerical and administrative duties under his father, who held high legal offices in the west of England. To this circumstance may be due the fact that Elyot, almost alone among the scholars of his generation, employed English exclusively in his writings<sup>23</sup> and labored with conscious purpose at the improvement of the then formless vernacular. His occasional translations of Latin verse into ragged rime royal have little merit; but he deserves deep gratitude for his intelligent, and essentially moderate, effort to extend the English vocabulary—"to ornate our language with using words in their proper signification"—and for his creation of a prose style. The speech of a man having authority, he says, should be "compendious, sententious, and delectable." His own style at its best has these qualities beyond any other English prose that had yet been written. A good example is the following paragraph in praise of benevolence:

When I remember what incomparable goodness hath ever proceeded of this virtue, benevolence, merciful God! what sweet flavor feel I piercing my spirits, whereof both my soul and body to my thinking do conceive such recreation, that it seemeth me to be in a paradise, or other semblable place of incomparable delights and pleasures. First I behold the dignity of that virtue, considering that God is thereby chiefly known and honored both of angel and man. As, contrariwise, the devil is hated and reproved both of God and man for his malice, which vice is contrarious and repugnant to benevolence. Wherefore without benevolence may be no God. For God is all goodness, all charity, all love, which wholly be comprehended in the said word benevolence.<sup>24</sup>

Though strongly influenced in its form by certain Continental works,<sup>25</sup> *The Governor* is a highly English book. It deplores the fact that in the æsthetic arts "Englishmen be inferiors to all other people," and argues that poetry, comedy, and dancing should not be omitted from a good education, though the supreme studies are history and Platonic philosophy. Elyot's manner is a pleasant one. "In every discipline," he says, "example is the best

<sup>22</sup> *The Booke Named The Governor*, ed. H. H. S. Croft (1883), p. cxcii (*The Proheme*). Compare D. Bush, "Tudor Humanism and Henry VIII," *Univ. of Toronto Quar.*, VII (1938), 162-177.

<sup>23</sup> A letter in Latin, from Elyot to Thomas Cromwell, is printed in Croft, I, pp. cxl-cxli.

<sup>24</sup> Croft, II, 92, 93.

<sup>25</sup> Giovanni Pontano, *De Principe* (1490); Francesco Patrizi, *De Regno et Regis Institutione* (1518); Erasmus, *Institutio Principis Christiani* (1516).

instructor," and his "accustomed manner" is "to recreate the spirits of the diligent reader with some delectable histories." Usually these are drawn from his wide classical knowledge; but he reinforces his Ciceronian discussion of friendship by adding a translation of Boccaccio's story of Titus and Gisippus, and in the chapter on "Placability" (Book II, chapter 6) he tells, apparently for the first time, the fable of the wild Prince Hal and the courageous Lord Chief Justice, which later became so popular.<sup>26</sup>

No English writer of this time was more imbued with the spirit of Platonic philosophy than Elyot. In three works which followed *The Governor* he employs the form of the Platonic dialogue. The most important of these is called *Of the Knowledge Which Maketh a Wise Man*, with the subtitle, "A disputacion Platonike."<sup>27</sup> It consists of five dialogues which develop in logical sequence the heart of Plato's philosophy: the true nature of wisdom, the qualities of the human soul, and the relation of men, beasts, and God. The speakers are Plato himself and Aristippus, who like Plato had been a pupil of Socrates, but had come to prefer a philosophy of pleasure. The arguments are handled neatly, and with a certain dramatic vividness. In the other two dialogues there is more effort to be amusing and a closer approach to the manner of the interlude. *Pasquil the Plain* (1532) treats of the respective advantages of speech and silence in a discussion between Gnatho, Harpocrates, and Pasquil. Gnatho enters with a New Testament in his hand and a copy of *Troilus and Criseyde* in his pocket. *The Defence of Good Women*<sup>28</sup> (1545) shows Caninius, who "like a cur at women's conditions is always barking," and Candidus arguing this matter and incidentally the superiority of Plato to Aristotle. Zenobia, a noble queen living in retirement, joins in the talk at the end, as a model of her sex and probably as a picture of Katharine of Aragon.

Elyot's  
Platonic  
Dialogues

Elyot took a place in the immediate line of humanist endeavor by translating (directly from the Greek) Isocrates' oration to Nicocles (*The Doctrinal of Princes*, 1534) and Plutarch's essay on the education of children (1535?). He translated also a sermon of Saint Cyprian and the *Rules of a Christian Life* of Pico della Mirandola (1534), and produced in 1538 a Latin-English dictionary, the first worthy of the name, which after going through several editions was enlarged by Thomas Cooper<sup>29</sup> and, under the title of "Cooper's Thesaurus," became one of the best known Elizabethan books. Two other works may be regarded as by-products of the immense reading that Elyot did for *The Governor*. *The Bankette* [banquet] of *Sapience* (printed as

Minor  
Works of  
Elyot

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part II*, v. ii. 64-121. For other possible borrowings of Shakespeare from Elyot see D. T. Starnes, "Shakespeare and Elyot's *Governour*," *Univ. of Texas Stud. in English*, vii (1927), 112-132; and D. Bush, "*Julius Caesar* and Elyot's *Governour*," *MLN*, lxi (1937), pp. 407-408.

<sup>27</sup> Three editions are known, the earliest dated 1533; reprinted in K. Schroeder, *Platonismus in der englischen Renaissance vor und bei Thomas Eliot* (Berlin, 1920; *Palaestra*, lxxxiii).

<sup>28</sup> The only edition bears this date, but the dialogue was written considerably earlier. It is reprinted in Foster Watson, *Vives and the Renaissance Education of Women* (1912), pp. 213-239, and by E. J. Howard (Oxford, Ohio, 1940).

<sup>29</sup> This was the Cooper, Bishop of Winchester, who was so badly handled by the Marprelate writers. See below, ch. vi.



"newly augmented" in 1539) is a collection of wise and moral sayings of the kind the Renaissance adored; it was popular enough to have at least five editions. *The Image of Governance* (1541) illustrates concretely in the life of the good emperor, Alexander Severus, the principles that *The Governor* laid down. Elyot states that he translated it largely from a Greek manuscript by "Eucolpius" which a gentleman of Naples had lent him nine years before. Nothing is known of this source, but it has been lately shown that about a third of the work is taken from the Latin history of Lampridius.<sup>30</sup> *The Image*, like Elyot's other works, was popular, as four surviving editions attest.

The Castle  
of Health

The most popular of all his works, and, apart from *The Governor*, the most interesting to students today, is *The Castle of Health* (1539), which had no fewer than fifteen editions by 1610.<sup>31</sup> It is a layman's guide to health, and was inveighed against by doctors, for that reason and because it was in English. Elyot's reply is supposed to contain a tribute to Linacre:

Now when I wrate first this book, I was not all ignorant in physick; for before that I was twenty years old a worshipful physician, and one of the most renowned at that time in England, perceiving me by nature inclined to knowledge, rad unto me the works of Galen of temperaments, natural faculties, the Introduction of Johannicius, with some of the aphorisms of Hippocrates.<sup>32</sup>

The reader will find here a lucid statement of the theory of humors and other medical theories, along with priceless details concerning sixteenth-century dietary and hygiene.

The Absorp-  
tion of  
Humanism

A successful effort to adapt humanist learning to the needs of a very wide public was made by William Baldwin<sup>33</sup> in *A Treatise of Moral Philosophy, Containing the Sayings of the Wise* (1548). The dedication to the young Earl of Hertford confesses its elementary nature:

William  
Baldwin

Forsomuch as it was not of value to be given to any ancient councillor, which are all therein sufficiently seen [skilled] already, I judged it most convenient to be given to some that were younger.

The first book relates the lives of the ancient philosophers, largely on the authority of Diogenes Laertius (2nd century). The second, "of precepts and counsels," classifies their pronouncements on the weightiest subjects; the third, "of proverbs and adages," collects a huge number of more trivial, or at least more varied, sayings, some of which are put into verse;<sup>34</sup> and the fourth book is a collection of elaborate similes which probably had an

<sup>30</sup> *The Image of Governance*, ed. H. E. Joyce (MS diss., Yale, 1926).

<sup>31</sup> The edition of 1541 has been recently reproduced in facsimile (*Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints*, 1937).

<sup>32</sup> Preface, ed. 1541, sig. A rv. Nothing in Elyot's voluminous works is more interesting than the long prefaces which he usually affixed to them. They deserve to be collected and published separately.

<sup>33</sup> This was the originator of *The Mirror for Magistrates*; see below, Part II, ch. II. Few facts concerning his life have been discovered.

<sup>34</sup> One of them is Surrey's fine translation of Martial, called "The Things that Cause a Quiet Life."



influence upon Meres's *Palladis Tamia* half a century later.<sup>35</sup> Baldwin thus provides both a Story of Philosophy and a manual for the English orator or poet. He owes, and acknowledges, a great debt to the Latin compilations of Erasmus, and in his life of Plutarch pays a high compliment to

the excellent and famous knight, Sir Thomas Elyot, whose good zeal and love both to further good learning and to profit his country appeareth as well thereby<sup>36</sup> as by other many works which he hath pained himself to bring into our language.

The book was expanded by Thomas Palfreyman (c. 1556) and by 1651 had been printed in something like thirty editions.<sup>37</sup>

Roger Ascham<sup>38</sup> (1515-1568) was in a sense the last humanist. The movement which began with Grocyn as an exotic force is in him wholly absorbed into the native culture, and his most famous passage is his fiery diatribe, on moral grounds, against the Italian journeys which had been so essential to the earlier humanism.<sup>39</sup> It was no longer necessary to go to Italy. Nor was it necessary to write in Latin. Though Ascham did so habitually in his letters and poems, and insists that that language or Greek would be easier for him and more "fit for my trade in study," yet in his three most important works he holds it better to "have written this English matter in the English tongue for English men." Ascham's English works cover a span of over twenty years; one belongs to the close of Henry VIII's reign, the second to the final months of Edward VI's, and the third to the first decade of Elizabeth's. They vary in everything except style. *Toxophilus*, the earliest (1545), is a pair of Platonic dialogues on the use of the long bow and the general theme, *mens sana in corpore sano*. The *Report... of the Affairs and State of Germany* is a philosophical analysis of the factors which during the three years (1550-1553) that Ascham had lived at Charles V's court as secretary to the ambassador had caused the waning of the Emperor's prestige. *The Schoolmaster*,<sup>40</sup> first printed in 1570, is a plan for a more humane and thorough system of education. Doctor Johnson said that it "perhaps contains the best advice that was ever given for the study of languages."

Roger  
Ascham

No scholar of the time was more learned than Ascham. In loving rivalry with his revered guide, Sir John Cheke (1514-1557), who was also his predecessor in the Regius Professorship of Greek, he had at Cambridge fed full on all the familiar and obscure authors. The references in his writings are a complete index to what the sixteenth century knew of Greece and Rome.<sup>41</sup> Yet his English style is markedly simple; it is far less Latinized, for example,

<sup>35</sup> As the earlier books and Elyot's *Bankette of Sapience* did on the Ling-Bodenham *Politeuphuia* of 1597. See below, Part II, ch. 1.

<sup>36</sup> That is, by Elyot's translation of Plutarch.

<sup>37</sup> See T. W. Camp, *William Baldwin and his Treatise of Moral Philosophy* (Yale diss., unpubl., 1935); E. I. Feasey, "William Baldwin," *MLR*, xx (1925), 407-418.

<sup>38</sup> The original form of the name is "Askham," and it should be so pronounced. A. Katterfeld, *Roger Ascham, sein Leben und seine Werke* (Strassburg, 1879) seems still to be the most copious source of information.

<sup>39</sup> Close of Book I of *The Schoolmaster. English Works of Roger Ascham* (Cambridge, 1904), pp. 223-236.

<sup>40</sup> See G. B. Parks, "The First Draft of Ascham's *Scholemaster*," *HLQ*, 1 (1938), 313-327.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Gertrude Noyes, *A Study of R. Ascham's Literary Citations* (Yale diss., unpubl., 1937).

than that of Elyot.<sup>42</sup> Ascham was one of the first to complain of "strange and inkhorn terms" and of the "indenture [i.e., law book] English" of Hall's Chronicle. The beauty of his own style is in its balance, as in this sentence from his *Report* on the Duke Maurice of Saxony:

He was five years prisoner in this court, where he won such love of all men as the Spaniards now say they would as gladly fight to set him up again as ever they did to pull him down; for they see that he is wise in all his doings, just in all his dealings, lowly to the meanest, princely with the biggest, and exceeding gentle to all; whom no adversity could ever move, nor policy at any time entice, to shrink from God and his word.

Ascham is a master also of graphic detail. His descriptions of St. John's College, Cambridge, in his youth, of the Lady Jane Grey at her Plato, and of his own pupil, Queen Elizabeth, linger in the imaginations of all who love good prose. *Toxophilus* and *The Schoolmaster* both open with a picture which a painter might set on canvas as his evocation of the humanist ideal. In the one it is a gentleman walking in the bright afternoon sunshine, absorbed in reading Plato's *Phaedrus*, while his friends go out with bows and arrows to shoot at the "pricks," or archery targets. In the other it is Sir William Cecil's chamber at Windsor (in December, 1563), where the Queen's greatest statesmen are dining together and passionately disputing the question, how best to make a schoolboy love his books.

*The  
Antiquaries*

*John  
Leland*

An important result of the study of classical antiquity by the humanists was to deepen curiosity concerning the ancient life of Britain and to supply investigators with improved techniques. At the same time the religious controversies incident to the Reformation gave polemical significance to the early church history of the island and stimulated researches which led, among other things, to recovery of the ability to read Anglo-Saxon (long an unknown tongue).<sup>43</sup> The term *antiquary* was first borne by John Leland (c. 1506-1552), who, after studying under William Lyly at St. Paul's School, and after a university career at Cambridge, Oxford, and Paris successively, became chaplain and librarian to King Henry VIII. In 1533 he was created "King's Antiquary" and empowered to search for manuscripts and relics of antiquity in all monasteries, convents, and colleges, "to the intent that the monuments of ancient writers . . . might be brought out of deadly darkness to lively light."<sup>44</sup> This commission was not unconnected with the plan for suppression of the monasteries which was then going forward. Leland devoted six years (c. 1536-1542) to a painstaking tour of England and Wales, collecting an enormous mass of documents which he was unable to organize, for in 1547 he went insane. His collections, now chiefly in the Bodleian Library and the British Museum, were finally edited in many volumes by Thomas Hearne of Oxford in the early eighteenth century. During his

<sup>42</sup> Ascham pays his homage to Elyot (as who, indeed, did not?): "... I was once in company with Sir Thomas Eliot Knight, which surely for his learning in all kind of knowledge bringeth much worship to all the nobility of England" (*Toxophilus, English Works*, p. 53).

<sup>43</sup> See T. Brooke: "The Renaissance of Germanic Studies in England," *PMLA*, xxix (1914), 135-151; E. N. Adams, *Old English Scholarship in England, 1566-1800* (New Haven, 1917).

<sup>44</sup> Leland, *New Year's Gift*, ed. 1895, p. 33.

lifetime Leland published only a vindication of the historical existence of King Arthur and some Latin poems of note, one of them being an obituary for Sir Thomas Wyatt.<sup>45</sup> A single small pamphlet on his antiquarian labors, which he called *A New Year's Gift to King Henry VIII*, was first printed in 1549, with large intercalations by John Bale (1495-1563), under the title, *The Laborious Journey and Search of John Leylande for England's Antiquities*.

Bale, whose polemical plays require notice elsewhere, was a vehement and even scurrilous partisan of the Reformation. Yet he was an ardent student of the past, and the additions by which he more than quadrupled the length of Leland's *Laborious Journey* contain the most vigorous denunciation of the destruction of old libraries, which accompanied the expropriation of monastic property. He exerted himself to make good the threatened loss by collecting all that could be learned about the earlier English writers. He published the first dictionary of English literature, *Illustrium Maioris Britanniae Scriptorum Summarium*, in 1548, and an enlarged version, *Scriptorum . . . Catalogus*, in 1557 and 1559; and left a further manuscript compilation which was edited by R. L. Poole and Mary Bateson in 1902. These are of great use to modern students.<sup>46</sup>

John Bale

John Stow, the chronicler (c. 1525-1605), was also a diligent collector of antiquities. His *Survey of London*<sup>47</sup> (1598) incorporates material about the city which Stow discovered in William Fitzstephen's twelfth-century life of Thomas à Becket and in many other places; it gives moreover the best account of the city as it was in Shakespeare's time. Stow also copied out in his own handwriting a large part of Leland's papers and later sold this material to the greatest of the Elizabethan antiquaries, William Camden (1551-1623), whose fame rests chiefly upon two mighty works, the *Britannia* (1586) and *Annals* (1615),<sup>48</sup> and upon the fact that he was the teacher of Ben Jonson. Camden had himself been trained at St. Paul's School and at Magdalen, Oxford; he became headmaster of the Westminster School and prepared for his pupils there a Greek grammar which ranked with the Latin grammar of Lyly. He was one of the members of the Society of Antiquaries, the earliest English learned academy,<sup>49</sup> which included also on its roll the great library-founder, Sir Robert Cotton, and the great scholar-jurist, John Selden<sup>50</sup> (1584-1654).

John Stow  
William Camden

<sup>45</sup> Cf. L. Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae* (1940), p. 26. Bale says of Leland: "he had a poetical wit, which I lament, for I judge it one of the chiefest things that caused him to fall besides his right discernings" (Preface to *Laborious Journey*, ed. 1895, pp. 24f).

<sup>46</sup> For Bale's plays and bibliographical references see below, ch. v.

<sup>47</sup> Ed. C. L. Kingsford (2v, Oxford, 1908-27).

<sup>48</sup> Camden's text of both books was in Latin. An English translation of the *Britannia* appeared in 1610, and of the *Annals* in 1625. The most interesting of Camden's works for the general reader is the collection of essays on various subjects (languages, names, money, apparel, etc.) which he published in 1605 under the title, *Remains of a Greater Work Concerning Britain* (reprinted, 1870).

<sup>49</sup> See H. R. Steeves, *Learned Societies and English Literary Scholarship* (1913), ch. II, pp. 5-35.

<sup>50</sup> Selden's *Table Talk*, compiled by the Rev. Richard Milward, his secretary, and first printed in 1689, has been edited by Sir Frederick Pollock (1927).

### III

#### The New World

Thomas  
More and  
the Utopia

Thomas More (1478-1535) died a martyr and has been made a saint, but his humanism was of the kind that concerned itself more with the expansion of man's possibilities in this world than with the study of the past or thoughts of the world to come.<sup>1</sup> He was fourteen years old when Columbus discovered America, and twenty-nine when Amerigo Vespucci popularized the news of that event. More is known to us by some memorable historical scenes, in which he played noble parts, but the scene that perhaps portrays him best is not historical. It is the scene he has imagined at the opening of the *Utopia*, when his Antwerp friend, Peter Giles, presented to him an alleged companion of Vespucci, one Raphael Hythloday,<sup>2</sup> with the assurance that the latter must be very welcome to More, "for there is no man this day living that can tell you of so many strange and unknown peoples and countries as this man can. And I know well that you be very desirous to hear of such news."

The account of the island of Utopia, in some unknown ocean of the New World, was written in 1515, when More was in Flanders on an embassy for Henry VIII. In the next year he wrote, in London, his account of the discoverer, Hythloday, which became Book 1 of the completed work. The two books of the *Utopia* are consciously contrasted, and artfully play the old world against the new. In Book 1 Hythloday, who though a voyager by vocation is a humanist by training, tells how much easier is the former's quest: "For nothing is more easy to be found than be barking Scyllas, ravening Celaenos [harpies] and Laestrygonians, devourers of people, and such like great and incredible monsters; but to find citizens ruled by good and wholesome laws, that is an exceeding rare and hard thing." He illustrates from conditions in England, which he had visited in the days of the good Cardinal Morton (d. 1500)—with whom More had served as page in the years before he went to Oxford. There, Hythloday says, he had argued against the savagery of the laws (e.g., hanging for theft), the inordinate greed (e.g., eviction of farmers to increase sheep-herding), nationalistic ambition, selfish war, unjust taxation, and the unequal distribution of property. The handling of these evils is cautious and ironic. They are referred to the reign of Henry VII, not Henry VIII, and to the tongue of Hythloday, not More. When Raphael's hearers rate him as too critical, his

<sup>1</sup> See W. Nelson, "Thomas More, Grammarian and Orator," *PMLA*, LVIII (1943), 337-352.

<sup>2</sup> When translated from the Greek, this name yields the meaning, "a recounter of nonsense." Similarly, Utopia means "the place that is not."

reply is always: "If you had been with me in Utopia!" Consequently, in Book II we have a description of a land where there is no private wealth or money, no unemployment or tavern-loitering, and no wars of aggression; where the working day is but six hours long, and "a great multitude of every sort of people, both men and women, go to hear lectures," notably on Greek learning; where gold and precious stones are held in contempt, and complete religious liberty exists, except only for those who deny a divine providence and the immortality of the soul. Again More's conclusion is ironic: *he* cannot agree to all the things Hythloday said, and he must needs confess "that many things be in the Utopian weal public which in our cities I may rather wish for than hope for."

The *Utopia* was written in Latin and circulated throughout Europe. It is a companion piece to the less imaginative and more openly satirical *Praise of Folly*, which More's friend Erasmus had written in his house six years before. The first English translation of the *Utopia* was made by Ralph Robinson, citizen and goldsmith of London (1551), "at the procurement and earnest request of George Tadlowe, citizen and haberdasher of the same city." It has not been surpassed.<sup>3</sup>

Neither *The Praise of Folly* nor the *Utopia* is particularly concerned with religion. More at no time followed the trend toward reformed doctrine that shows itself in most of the other English humanists, e.g., Colet, Cheke, and Ascham; but it was the rise of Lutheranism after 1520 that drove him definitely into the other camp and produced the great mass of controversial writing which filled his later years.<sup>4</sup> His scanty English verse includes a "merry jest" or quasi-ballad on the terrific beating administered to a police sergeant who disguised himself as a friar in order to make an arrest, and some not very distinguished rime royal stanzas on serious subjects, such as the "Lamentation on the Death of Queen Elizabeth"<sup>5</sup> (1503). More important is the prose *History of King Richard III*, dated about 1513, which was written both in English and in Latin. Neither version was completed; the one in English is the more comprehensive and the more significant, since it passed almost unaltered into Holinshed's Chronicle and thus became the direct source of Shakespeare's *Richard III*.<sup>6</sup> More derived most of the vivid details in his life of Richard from Cardinal Morton, who had had a large part in the events described. The effect is that of an eye-witness account, and this is the effect which the best biography aimed at in Henry VIII's

More's  
Religion

His English  
Verse

His  
Richard III

<sup>3</sup> Of the many editions of the *Utopia* those by J. H. Lupton (Oxford, 1895) and by G. Sampson and A. Guthkelch (1910) may be recommended. For discussion see R. P. Adams, "The Philosophical Unity of More's *Utopia*," *SP*, xxxviii (1941). 45-65.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. below, ch. vi.

<sup>5</sup> This was the Queen of Henry VII. The poems referred to will be found in *The English Works of Sir Thomas More*, ed. W. E. Campbell and A. W. Reed, Vol. I (1931), pp. 327-344, 381-396.

<sup>6</sup> See R. W. Chambers, "The Authorship of the *History of Richard III*," in *English Works of More* cited above, pp. 24-53; L. F. Dean, "Literary Problems in More's *Richard III*," *PMLA*, LVIII (1943). 22-41; and for a work of opposed intention see W. G. Zeeveld, "A Tudor Defense of Richard III," *PMLA*, LV (1940). 946-957.

Roper's Life  
of More

Thomas  
Starkey's  
Dialogue

reign. George Cavendish's *Life of Cardinal Wolsey* is a classic in this style;<sup>7</sup> the *Life* of More himself by his son-in-law, William Roper (1496-1578), is something further: it is one of the most charming books in the world, and has been called by R. W. Chambers "probably the most perfect little biography in the English language."<sup>8</sup>

Many of the social and political reforms advocated in the *Utopia* are urged with still more frankness in Thomas Starkey's remarkable *Dialogue between Pole and Lupset* (1535?)<sup>9</sup> and *Exhortation to the People* (1536). Though an acute dialectician, Starkey lacks literary grace, and he also lacked political prudence in such a degree that he may be counted fortunate in quietly dying a short time after he had despatched his dialogue with a covering letter to Henry VIII.

One of the king's chaplains, Starkey was also a personal friend of Reginald Pole and was employed to secure from the latter a public judgment favorable to Henry in the dispute over his divorce (1535). He optimistically misrepresented Pole's point of view, and was utterly discredited when Pole's unmitigated championship of the papal decision finally appeared (*Pro Ecclesiasticae Unitatis Defensione*, 1536). Against this inauspicious background he constructed his imaginary conversation between Pole and the late Thomas Lupset (d. 1532), a friend of More and sometime Reader in Humanity at Oxford.<sup>10</sup> Both interlocutors are pleasingly presented, but there seems to be an unconscious irony in the fact that Lupset, a sometimes indiscreet pupil of Colet and Erasmus, has the timid rôle, while Pole, later Queen Mary's Archbishop, presents the root-and-branch proposals for democratic change in church and state. Pole does most of the talking. It is he who asserts that the monk who retires to the safety of a religious house is less praiseworthy than "he which in dangerous prosperity, so full of so many occasions of errors and doing amiss, governeth his mind well and keepeth it upright;" it is he who advocates taxes on bachelors and marriage of the secular clergy, as well as translation of the gospel and divine service into the vernacular. He objects outspokenly to the Pope, "usurping a certain cloaked tyranny under the pretext of religion," and says to Lupset: "I will not follow the steps of Luther, whose judgment I esteem very little; and yet he and his

<sup>7</sup> Cavendish was a gentleman usher in Wolsey's household. His manuscript life was first printed in the nineteenth century.

<sup>8</sup> See E. V. Hitchcock, *Roper's Life of More* (Oxford, 1935). Another early life of More in English, by Nicholas Harpsfield, has been recently (1932) printed for the first time. Of the many recent studies of More evoked by the quartercentenary of his death the best is doubtless that of R. W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (1935). See also E. M. G. Routh, *Sir Thomas More and his Friends* (Oxford, 1934).

<sup>9</sup> The date is not quite certain; see J. A. Gee, *The Life and Works of Thomas Lupset* (New Haven, 1928), pp. 150-152. The only printed edition of the *Dialogue* is that of J. M. Cowper (1871; *EETSES*, 12), but see also *Starkey's Life and Letters* (1878; *EETSES*, 32). There is important new material, especially on Starkey's *Exhortation*, in W. G. Zeeveld, "Thomas Starkey and the Cromwellian Polity," *Jour. of Mod. Hist.*, xv (1943), 177-191.

<sup>10</sup> The conversation may be imagined as taking place in 1529 (Gee, *op. cit.*, p. 153). Lupset's chief works are *A Treatise of Charity* (1533), *An Exhortation to Young Men* (1535), and *A Compendious and a very Fruitful Treatise teaching the Way of Dying Well, by the flower of learned men of his time, Thomas Lupset* (1534). They are broad-minded humanist tracts and have been well edited by J. A. Gee (*op. cit.*).

disciples be not so wicked and foolish that in all things they err. Heretics be not in all things heretics."

Though Pole, Lupset, and Starkey were all clerics, this dialogue is not a work of religious controversy. It has a hearty, mundane tone, explicit in Pole's rebuke to his companion: "Master Lupset, you speak like a man of the old world and not of this time," and in his definition of felicity as including health, strength, beauty, riches, and virtue of mind, "with all honest and due behaviour both toward God and man," which is certainly more humanist than ascetic, and more sixteenth-century than fifteenth. The real interest of the dialogue is social and political. Like the *Utopia*, but more openly, it advocates elective monarchy. "It is not man," says Pole, "that can make a wise prince of him that lacketh wit by nature, nor make him just that is a tyrant for pleasure. But this is in man's power: to elect and choose him that is both wise and just, and make him a prince, and him that is a tyrant so to depose."<sup>11</sup> It is regrettable that Starkey was not master of a more sprightly style, or capable of restricting himself to less than 75,000 words; but it is impossible to read his dialogue without admiration of its downright merits or without wondering whether Henry VIII did indeed read the manuscript copy that Starkey so heartily and incautiously commended to him.<sup>12</sup>

The chronicle of Tudor poetry, with its fine frenzies and passions, begins and ends with the saga<sup>13</sup> of a noble friendship. Through Wyatt and Surrey, stationed like Pillars of Hercules at the head of the Elizabethan sea, flowed the inspiration. At the other end stand Beaumont and Fletcher, rather parallel figures, through whom the last surges of this tide pass into the lyrically alien reaches of the Stuart period. In each case the consideration paid to higher social rank has attracted the fancy to the younger and shorter-lived of the pair of poets. Surrey and Beaumont each lived about thirty years; Wyatt (1503-1542) lived nearly forty, and Fletcher forty-six. But while Beaumont, by right of his finer and purer poetic spirit, may deserve

*The Tudor  
Lyric*

<sup>11</sup> *Dialogue*, ed. Cowper, p. 167. On the next page a rather doubtful concession is made to the reigning king: "Albeit we have now in our days, by the providence of God, such a prince, and of such wisdom, that he may right well and justly be subject to no law . . . yet we now . . . may not deny but that in our order here is a certain fault, and to the same now devise of some remedy."

<sup>12</sup> The prose literature of social protest in Henry VIII's reign includes the brief but pungent *Supplication for the Beggars* (1529) by Simon Fish, which addresses the king on the greed and immorality of the clergy. Incidentally, Fish questioned the doctrine of purgatory, and thus evoked a reply from Sir Thomas More, *The Supplication of Souls*, which in turn led to the controversy between More and Tyndale. Several other *Supplications*, urging reform of abuses, followed; see Furnivall and Cowper, *Four Supplications, 1529-1553* (1871; EETS, 13). Henry Brinkelow, a protestant exile who wrote under the name of "Roderick Mors," published two invective tracts: *The Complaint of Roderick Mors* (1542) and *The Lamentation of a Christian against the City of London*, "printed at Jericho in the land of promise" (but actually at London, 1542), and later at Nürnberg. The first addresses the Parliament on the subject of social abuses; the second reprimands the Londoners for their religious laxity. Both are reprinted, (1874; EETS, 32). See H. O. Taylor, *Thought and Expression in the Sixteenth Century* (1920), II, 50-69.

<sup>13</sup> There is little likelihood of an actual friendship between Wyatt and Surrey, who can have met but seldom.



the precedence granted him over Fletcher, to put Surrey before Wyatt would be a critical distortion.

*Sir Thomas  
Wyatt*

The finest part of Sir Thomas Wyatt's work is the part which stands freest of foreign influences. It is a series of lyrics, written for the lute, singularly native in melody and form, and singularly individual in their appeal. Nothing very like these thrilling little songs had appeared before, and nothing very like them followed. There is a suggestion of the lyric manner of Sir Walter Raleigh, and occasionally of Donne; but the poetry that in quality they most resemble is perhaps that which appeared in 1896 in *A Shropshire Lad*. Like Housman, Wyatt "has an unquenchable desire and no hope."<sup>14</sup>

*Wyatt's  
Songs*

His singing range is very restricted. The mood of his songs is nearly always that of the stout-hearted but forsaken lover—and a piquancy is added to this theme by the not unlikely rumor that he had been Anne Boleyn's lover before King Henry was. His typical poem is a series of lyric cries, artfully repeated and modulated, and clinched by a refrain at the end of each stanza, e.g.,

Take heed betime, lest ye be spied; ...  
Therefore take heed!

And wilt thou leave me thus?  
Say nay, say nay, for shame! ...  
Say nay, say nay!

Disdain me not without desert,  
Nor leave me not so suddenly. ...  
Disdain me not!

Blame not my lute, for he must sound  
Of this and that as liketh me. ...  
Blame not my lute.

In many of these the utterance is perfect, as in the following:

There was never nothing more me pained,  
Nor nothing more me moved,  
As when my sweetheart her complained  
That ever she me loved.  
Alas the while!

or this:

Forget not yet the tried intent  
Of such a truth as I have meant,  
My great travail so gladly spent:  
Forget not yet!

or in this last stanza of a song on his liberation:

<sup>14</sup> J. C. Squire, *Essays on Poetry* (1924), p. 155.



Was never bird, tangled in lime,  
 That brake away in better time  
 Than I, that rotten boughs did climb  
 And had no hurt, but scaped free.  
 Now ha, ha, ha, full well is me,  
 For I am now at liberty.

Fifty or sixty poems of this sort are Wyatt's chief warrant of immortality; and they show that a new world was opening for poetry, a world in which the microcosm, man, was as a center of interest displacing the macrocosm in which he lived. Wyatt was perhaps the first English poet to adopt consciously the principle previously illustrated only by the anonymous writers of popular song; namely, that the expression of personal feeling in the simplest and briefest form is itself the highest poetry and needs no narrative or allegorical support.

If in these respects Wyatt was following native influences, he also (as Tillyard says<sup>15</sup>) "let the Renaissance into English verse" by importing Italian and French forms more largely than any predecessor had done since Chaucer. He had lived, on the King's service, in France, Italy, and Spain. The story of his first visit to Italy is entertainingly told in the Wyatt Papers.<sup>16</sup> In 1527 the ambassador, Sir John Russell, as he was being rowed down the Thames encountered Wyatt, and

*Foreign  
 Influences  
 on Wyatt*

after salutations was demanded of him whither he went, and had answer: "To Italy, sent by the king." "And I," said Wyatt, "will, if you please, ask leave, get money, and go with you." "No man more welcome," answered the ambassador.

Wyatt returned from Italy, bringing no observable store of the classical learning with which the English humanists had enriched themselves,<sup>17</sup> but bringing new poetic patterns that Dante and Petrarch had made famous. The three Horatian verse epistles, which he wrote about 1536 to his friends Pointz and Brian, against the life at court and the quest of glory, are in *terza rima*. Many of his "epigrams," adapted from Italian and French sources, are in *ottava rima*; and both metres are extensively employed in his *Penitential Psalms*. He wrote a number of imitative *rondeaux*—intricate fifteen-line affairs, and, in particular, he furnished English poetry with one of its most useful implements by writing thirty-two sonnets. Seventeen of these are adaptations of Petrarch. Twenty-eight have the Petrarchan *abbaabba* octave and twenty-six the *cddcee* sestet. In the last three only he experiments with

<sup>15</sup> E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt, A Selection and a Study* (1929), p. 13. This volume contains a generous selection of Wyatt's best poems and an admirable introduction.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in the *DNB*, article on Wyatt.

<sup>17</sup> Wyatt (who usually signed his name "Wiat") was an M. A. of Cambridge. He had the education of a gentleman, as became the only son of one of Henry VII's most faithful and best rewarded followers and the inheritor of Allington Castle in Kent; but he shows no particular leaning toward classical scholarship. His prose translation of Plutarch's epistle on *The Quiet of Mind* was presented to Katherine of Aragon as a new year's gift (1528) and printed by Pynson. The style is not distinguished.

Wyatt's  
Sonnets

the Shakespearean formula, three quatrains and a couplet, and virtually produces it in his thirtieth, which rimes *abab, abab, abab, cc.*<sup>18</sup>

Wyatt's sonnets are in the main hard reading, being disfigured by much "not keeping of accent," which is a particularly hangable offence in a sonneteer.<sup>19</sup> The most charitable explanation is that which Sir E. K. Chambers offers; namely, that they "ought to be regarded as mere exercises in translation or adaptation, roughly jotted down in whatever broken rhythms came readiest to hand, and intended perhaps for subsequent polishing at some time of leisure which never presented itself."<sup>20</sup> How fluent Wyatt can occasionally be is indicated by No. 23, for which, incidentally, no foreign source has been discovered:

Divers doth use, as I have heard and know,  
When that to change their ladies do begin,  
To moan and wail, and never for to lin [cease],  
Hoping thereby to pease [calm] their painful woe.  
And some there be, that, when it chanceth so  
That women change and hate where love hath been,  
They call them false, and think with words to win  
The hearts of them which elsewhere doth go.

But as for me, though that by chance indeed  
Change hath outworn the favor that I had,  
I will not wail, lament, nor yet be sad,  
Nor call her false that falsely did me feed:  
But let it pass, and think it is of kind [by nature]  
That often-change doth please a woman's mind.

Henry  
Howard,  
Earl of  
Surrey

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey,<sup>21</sup> (c. 1517-1547) was a man of action, of courage, and of sensibility. In 1539 the Dean of Westbury, John Barlow, called him "the most foolish proud boy that is in England,"<sup>22</sup> and if he was a man of subtle thought, Holbein's portraits of him, as well as his own verses, do him injustice. He had a good many of the qualities of Lord Byron, and like Byron early became a romantic figure, moulding the tastes of his readers.

Grace and tenderness of feeling beautify Surrey's work as manly simplicity does that of Wyatt. He tends to be pictorial and discursive where Wyatt is sententious. His stanzas written during the imprisonment he endured at Windsor—apparently for striking a political enemy in the King's Court—

<sup>18</sup> The sonnets are referred to by the numbers assigned them in A. K. Foxwell's *Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (2v, 1913).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Ben Jonson on Donne, *Conversations with Drummond*.

<sup>20</sup> E. K. Chambers, *Sir Thomas Wyatt and Some Collected Studies* (1933), p. 122.

<sup>21</sup> Surrey did not live long enough to inherit a peerage, but bore this "courtesy title" as eldest son of the Duke of Norfolk. His life has been sympathetically written by Edwin Casady, *Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey* (1938), and his poems edited by F. M. Padelford, *The Poems of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey* (rev. ed., 1928). See also J. M. Berdan, *Early Tudor Poetry* (1920), pp. 504-545.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in a letter from George Constantyne to Thomas Cromwell, *Archaeologia*, xxiii (1831). 62.

are among his best. He recalls in sentimental retrospect and in great detail the occupations and feelings of the boyhood days he had spent at Windsor with the king's son, Richmond, who had become Surrey's brother-in-law, and now was dead:

The stately sails, the ladies bright of hue,  
The dances short, long tales of great delight

The palm play,<sup>23</sup> where, despoiled [stripped] for the game,  
With dazed eyes oft we by gleams of love  
Have missed the ball and got sight of our dame,  
To bait [attract] her eyes which kept the leads <sup>24</sup> above.

The secret thoughts imparted with such trust,  
The wanton talk, the divers change of play,  
The friendship sworn, each promise kept so just,  
Wherewith we passed the winter nights away.

Equally pleasing are the stanzas on Wyatt's death, one of five poems in which Surrey mentions the elder poet with reverence. This one begins, "W. resteth here, that quick could never rest," and goes on to catalogue Wyatt's good points:

A head, where wisdom mysteries did frame;  
Whose hammers beat still in that lively brain  
As on a stithy, where that some work of fame  
Was daily wrought to turn to Britain's gain, . . .

This stately tribute must, one would suppose, have been the model for Sir Walter Raleigh's similar epitaph on Sidney forty-five years later.

Like Wyatt, Surrey employed both the *terza rima* and *ottava rima*, though rarely, using the former measure for the most amusing of his poems, the mock-apology he wrote when he and Wyatt's son were charged with breaking windows in a nocturnal frolic in 1543. He explains that his motive was to make the London burghers repent of their hidden sins by simulating a visit of the wrath of God. He used altogether a surprising number of metrical patterns,<sup>25</sup> and his work is almost completely free from rough lines. His artistic innovations are concerned mainly with his use of the sonnet, blank verse, and the "poulter's measure."

Surrey's sonnets are only half as numerous as Wyatt's, but of the fifteen or sixteen credited to him ten have the "Shakespearean" rime scheme, which was thenceforth much the most frequent in the sixteenth century. They are easy and interesting, sometimes judiciously paraphrased from Petrarch, and sometimes based on Surrey's own observation of natural beauty or on incidents in his life. Three of them are tributes to Wyatt, and one an epitaph on the poet's faithful squire, Thomas Clere. The most famous is the one on

*Surrey's  
Sonnets*

<sup>23</sup> I.e., hand ball, an early variety of tennis.

<sup>24</sup> I.e., balconies with floors of lead.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Casady, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-243.

the Lady Geraldine, "From Tuscan came my lady's worthy race,"<sup>26</sup> which seems to have been almost solely responsible for the fictitious romance with which Thomas Nashe and other Elizabethans embellished Surrey's story.

*Blank verse*

Blank verse first appears in English poetry in the version of the fourth book of the *Æneid* which was printed about 1554 with a title-page describing it as "translated into English, and drawn into a straunge metre, by Henry late Earl of Surrey."<sup>27</sup> A few years later (1557) Richard Tottel published another text of this work, along with Surrey's rendering of *Æneid*, Book II, and in his *Miscellany* of the same year added two shorter blank verse poems by Nicholas Grimald.<sup>28</sup> Whether Surrey made use of Gavin Douglas's translation of the *Æneid*, which, though not printed in his lifetime, may have been available in manuscript, is not certain; but that he got the hint for his "strange metre" from Italy, whence strange metres usually came, can hardly be doubted. In 1534 a translation of Virgil's fourth book in the Italian equivalent of blank verse (*versi sciolti*) had appeared, and other books, including the second, were in print in Italian by 1540. Surrey's blank verse is far more compact than Douglas's stanzas. It already possesses force and variety, but a generation passed before this metre was thoroughly domesticated in England. How far its refinement was to go is evident if one compares Surrey's version of *Æneid*, iv. 365 ff.,

*Surrey's  
Translation  
of the  
Æneid*

Faithless, forsworn, thy dame ne goddess was,  
Nor Dardanus beginner of thy race,  
But of hard rocks Mount Caucase monstrous  
Bred thee, and teats of tiger gave thee suck,

with Marlowe's:

Thy mother was no goddess, perjur'd man,  
Nor Dardanus the author of thy stock;  
But thou art sprung from Scythian Caucasus,  
And tigers of Hyrcania gave thee suck.<sup>29</sup>

The verse form to which Surrey was most addicted is the iambic couplet of twelve and fourteen syllables alternately, for which George Gascoigne, in his *Certain Notes of Instruction* (1575) invented a jesting name that has stuck, "Poulter's Measure." It was, Gascoigne says, "the commonest sort of verse which we use nowadays,"<sup>30</sup> and, though Wyatt had employed it in a couple of poems, Surrey's example was doubtless responsible for the baleful

<sup>26</sup> Geraldine was Elizabeth Fitzgerald, a child of nine when the sonnet was written. Cf. Casady, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-250.

<sup>27</sup> This has been reproduced in facsimile and edited, from the only surviving copy in the library of Mr. Pforzheimer, by Herbert Hartman (Purchase, N. Y., 1933).

<sup>28</sup> Grimald's blank verse poems are likewise translations of Latin hexameter verse, one from Walter of Lille's *Alexandreis*, the other from Beza's *Mors Ciceronis*. For "Tottel's Miscellany," in which the general body of Surrey's and Wyatt's poems was first printed, see below, Part II. ch. I.

<sup>29</sup> Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragedy of Dido Queen of Carthage*, lines 1564-1567 (Act V, sc. 1).

<sup>30</sup> *Complete Works of George Gascoigne*, ed. J. W. Cunliffe, I (1907). 472.

luxuriance with which it overspread the Elizabethan song books. The lines could, of course, be split and made to look like lyric; e.g., *"Poulter's Measure"*

Wrapt in my careless cloak,  
As I walk to and fro,  
I see how love can show what force  
There reigneth in his bow.<sup>31</sup>

But there is a fatal singsong in this measure, and a terrible temptation to verbosity. Of the eighteen poems—nearly a thousand lines in all—that Surrey wrote in poulter's measure, about half were translations from *Ecclesiastes* and the *Psalms*. Thence it and its derivative, the straight "fourteener" couplet, completely overran devotional literature; and as exemplified in the Sternhold and Hopkins metrical psalms (1547, etc.), they had a melancholy effect on piety which lasted for centuries.<sup>32</sup> One might say that the progress of poesy in the Elizabethan age was largely a matter of disentangling it from poulter's measure and developing blank verse. The best and the worst in the prosody of the later sixteenth century both derive from Surrey. *Sternhold and Hopkins*

<sup>31</sup> "Tottel's Miscellany," 26; Padelford, *Poems of Surrey*, p. 78.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Sternhold preferred the "fourteener" form, i.e., seven feet in each line; but his version of Psalm xxv is in poulter's measure: "I lift my heart to thee, my God and guide most just. Now suffer me to take no shame, for in thee do I trust."

## IV

### Satire

John  
Skelton

"Better a dumb mouth than a brainless skull," said John Skelton <sup>1</sup> (c. 1460-1529); but he heeded the adage very little, if a brainless skull is one which prompts its possessor to speak when silence would be more decorous or more prudent. It is doubtful whether many readers, except the special enemies of Cardinal Wolsey, have derived as much pleasure from Skelton's verse as the poet's manifold endowments and engaging personality qualified him to bestow.<sup>2</sup> He is one of the hardest authors to measure artistically, and it is not even easy to fix his historical position. Chronologically, he is one of the earliest of the Tudor writers, and the mechanism of his verse has more affinity with the fifteenth century than with Wyatt and Surrey; but his satiric spirit links him spiritually with Lindsay and the period of the Reformation, while the earliest literary notice of him, by Caxton in 1490,<sup>3</sup> presents him as a humanist scholar.

His Garland  
of Laurel

Most of Skelton's peculiarities are combined in his *Right Delectable Treatise upon a Goodly Garland or Chaplet of Laurel*, which is his longest poem and one of his latest.<sup>4</sup> It begins in medieval fashion and in the rime royal stanza. Skelton, while a guest of the Countess of Surrey at Sheriff-Hutton Castle, Yorkshire, falls asleep beneath an oak tree and dreams that he hears Pallas Athene and the Queen of Fame arguing concerning him. The queen complains that despite the laurel with which he has been graced,<sup>5</sup> he has become "wonder slack" in poetic production, to which the goddess replies that he is justly cautious,

For if he gloriously polish his matter,  
Then men will say how he doth but flatter;

<sup>1</sup> The standard text of Skelton is still that of Alexander Dyce (1843), a remarkable piece of scholarship, several times reprinted. A handsome, but incomplete, selection of his poems, slightly edited by Richard Hughes, appeared in a limited edition (1924); and the "complete poems" (modernized), edited by Philip Henderson (1931). Some very illuminating critical interpretation has recently appeared, notably in William Nelson, *John Skelton, Laureate* (1939) and I. A. Gordon, *John Skelton, Poet Laureate* (Melbourne, 1943). See also J. M. Berdan, *Early Tudor Poetry*, pp. 156-205, and L. J. Lloyd, *John Skelton, A Sketch of His Life and Writings* (Oxford, 1938).

<sup>2</sup> Skelton's art has, however, a strong affinity with much of our most recent English verse. See W. H. Auden, "John Skelton", in *The Great Tudors* (1935), and I. A. Gordon, *op. cit.*, ch. xii.

<sup>3</sup> In the preface to *The Boke of Eneydos*, Caxton refers to him as "Master John Skelton, late created poet laureate in the university of Oxenford," and praises his classical learning in the highest terms. See, however, R. L. Dunbabin, "Skelton's Relation to Humanism," *MLR*, xii (1917). 129-137.

<sup>4</sup> Printed in 1523, the year of its composition.

<sup>5</sup> He had been crowned poet laureate, not only at Oxford (see note 3), but also at Louvain and Cambridge.

And if so him fortune to write true and plain,  
 As some time he must vices remord [rebuke],  
 Then some will say he hath but little brain,  
 And how his words with reason will not accord.

Then, in a passage reminiscent of Chaucer's *House of Fame*,<sup>6</sup> Æolus the trumpeter is bidden to summon all the poets in Fame's retinue, who appear to the number of nearly a thousand, led by Phoebus. Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate are among them, and these, after exchanging courtesies with Skelton, leave him in the guidance of Fame's "registry," Occupation, who with words of praise and assurance leads him to a walled field, with a thousand gates, new and old, by which the poets of the various nations are admitted, while the unworthy aspirants are driven off with gunshot. Within the gate which has engraved on it a capital *A* for "Anglia" Skelton finds a lovely garden where the Muses and Dryads dance, and a building in which the Countess of Surrey is directing her ladies in the embroidery of a coronal of laurel

for Skelton, my clerk,  
 For to his service I have such regard,  
 That of our bounty we will him reward.

Skelton then addresses verses of homage to the countess and to each of her ten attendants. He places the laurel upon his head and, once more accompanied by Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate, presents himself before the Queen of Fame, where Occupation reads—in 350 lines, in which the rime royal is interspersed with "Skeltonics" and even Latin hexameters—the long roll of the author's works. The poem is completed by some Latin lines in laudation of Skelton and in compliment to Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey, with the latter of whom he was now, or desired to be, reconciled.

The main fabric of the *Garland of Laurel* is evidently medieval. *The Bouge of Court* (i.e., "court rations") a much earlier poem,<sup>7</sup> is likewise a dream allegory in rime royal; but the dream is here a nightmare. The hazards of one who lives at the court are powerfully imaged in the growing terror of a young man, Dread, who believes himself at sea with a gang of ruffians and awakes at the moment when he is about to leap overboard to escape their malign whisperings.<sup>8</sup> It is doubtless not unbiographical and may supply the lack of recorded fact concerning Skelton's life at court during the first half of Henry VII's reign. In 1498, at an unusually advanced age, he entered the priesthood, and the next year received from Erasmus some, probably quite conventional, praise as the tutor of the young prince, later Henry VIII,

The Bouge  
of Court

Skelton at  
Court

<sup>6</sup> See A. S. Cook, "Skelton's *Garland of Laurel* and Chaucer's *House of Fame*," *MLR*, x (1916). 9-14.

<sup>7</sup> Printed, and probably composed, about 1499. See H. S. Sale, "The Date of Skelton's *Bouge of Court*," *MLN*, lxi (1937). 572-574.

<sup>8</sup> The theme may have been slightly suggested by Brant's *Narrenschiff*. See C. H. Herford, *Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century* (1886), pp. 350-357.



for whom he wrote in 1501 a little Latin manual of conduct called *Speculum Principis*.<sup>9</sup> At some time before 1504 he had been presented to the rectory of Diss in Norfolk, nearly a hundred miles from London.

*Skelton at  
Diss*

Philip  
Sparrow

At Diss Skelton composed some of his most caustic poems,—e.g., *Ware the Hawk*, against a fellow-priest more given to falconry than religion—and also the most endearing and playful of his works, *Philip Sparrow*. This is in Skeltonic verse,<sup>10</sup> and through most of its length is a dramatic monologue set in the mouth of a Norfolk schoolgirl, Jane Scroop, whose pet sparrow has been killed by a cat. Skelton's uneconomic art here achieves two triumphs: one in his evocation of the various church services for the dead, which one seems to hear intoned as the poem proceeds;<sup>11</sup> and a greater one in the complete picture he gives of a young girl's mind. Jane seems to empty out the whole content of her innocent brain: all the kinds of birds she knows and all the kinds of books, all her sentiments of love, hate, and propriety, and all the vivid trifles she has observed about the slain bird. Toward the end the poet takes over the discourse and shapes it into a eulogy of Jane.

Eleanor  
Rumming

The converse and logical companion piece of this delicate poem is the indelicate *Tunning of Eleanor Rumming*, the only major work of Skelton which could justify Pope's epithet, "beastly."<sup>12</sup> It is divided into seven "passus" after the fashion of Langland and has traces of that poet's alliterative rhythm, which indeed must be considered in any full study of the origins of the "Skeltonic" verse.<sup>13</sup> It owes an obvious debt to Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* and a less conspicuous one to the opening of the *Nun's Priest's Tale*; but in following these earlier realists Skelton has bettered the instruction. His biting rimes and prodigious fecundity of detail are nowhere more effective than in this picture of the appalling old ale-wife who dwelt on a hill beside Leatherhead in Surrey, and the abominable hags who came to her shop. It has the actual beastliness of bestial humanity; it marks one limit of Skelton's graphic power, and *Philip Sparrow* marks the other.

*Skelton's  
Lyrics*

Skelton is a memorable lyricist. Besides shaping his own peculiar rime into song measure—as in *Woefully Arrayed*, *The Manner of the World Nowadays*, and some of his outbursts against the Scots<sup>14</sup>—he gave wings also to the grave rime royal, syncopating the lines in *Against a Comely Coistrown* and *Womanhood, Wanton, ye Want*, and lightening it with a refrain in *Lullay, Lullay, Like a Child*.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> First printed by F. M. Salter, *Speculum*, ix (1934). 25-37.

<sup>10</sup> Lines, usually of two or three accented syllables, arranged in blocks of consecutive rime.

<sup>11</sup> See I. A. Gordon, "Skelton's *Philip Sparrow* and the Roman Service-book," *MLR*, xxix (1934). 389-396.

<sup>12</sup> *Epistle to Augustus*, lines 37 f.: "Chaucer's worst ribaldry is learned by rote, And beastly Skelton heads of houses quote."

<sup>13</sup> William Nelson, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-101, has argued the derivation of Skeltonic rime from Latin rimed prose.

<sup>14</sup> His *Ballad of the Scottish King*, on the Battle of Flodden (1513), has been called the earliest printed English ballad. (Reproduced in facsimile by John Ashton, 1882).

<sup>15</sup> Compare also *Garland of Laurel*, lines 836-905.



At the age of sixty, more or less, Skelton focused his satiric powers in three long poems, which with increasing vehemence and clarity attack Cardinal Wolsey and the corruption of the kingdom. These have all been referred on persuasive evidence to the brief period between the autumn of 1521 and the same season in 1522.<sup>16</sup> *Speak, Parrot!*, in rime royal, cloaks its satire by putting it into the mouth of a parrot who employs scraps of most of the known languages and also some apparent gibberish. The portion of this poem which the early printers of Skelton published contains no very clear satire of Wolsey, but rather a thorough-going attack upon the new, humanistic system of education. A single manuscript, however, in the British Museum<sup>17</sup> contains nearly two hundred and fifty additional lines, consisting of four postscripts or "envoys," obscurely dated and undoubtedly directed against the cardinal. These, it may be assumed, were intended for the exclusive perusal of the poet's most trusted friends.

*Poems  
Against  
Wolsey*

*Speak,  
Parrot!*

In the two poems that so quickly followed the author abandoned rime royal like an encumbering garment and bent to his work in hard-hitting Skeltonics, "angry Skelton's breathless rimes," as Joseph Hall well termed them.<sup>18</sup> *Colin Clout*, indeed, preserves a thin pretense of impersonality; it is not Skelton who speaks but the typical representative of the proletariat, and the theme announced is the faultiness of all classes:

*Colin  
Clout*

And if ye stand in doubt  
Who brought this rime about,  
My name is Colin Clout.  
I purpose to shake out  
All my cunning bag,  
.  
.  
.  
For, as far as I can see,  
It is wrong with each degree.

But the faults actually stressed are those of the higher clergy, and the particularity with which they are developed is often so great as to make them fit only the Cardinal-Chancellor.

In *Why Come Ye Not to Court?* there is no disguise; after a few pages of warming-up Skelton drives straight at his mark. The king's admiral, "the good Earl of Surrey," has defeated the French (July-October, 1522),

*Why Come  
Ye Not to  
Court?*

But yet they overshoot us  
With crowns and with scutus [i.e., écus, coins];  
With scutis and crowns of gold  
I dread we are bought and sold;  
It is a wonders wark:  
They shoot all at one mark,

<sup>16</sup> See W. Nelson, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-190; H. L. R. Edwards and W. Nelson, "The Dating of Skelton's Later Poems," *PMLA*, LIII (1938), 601-622. I. A. Gordon (*John Skelton*, pp. 147f) dates *Colin Clout* 1519-20 and regards it as the earliest of the group.

<sup>17</sup> Harleian 2252.

<sup>18</sup> *Virgidemiarum*, lib. 6, sat. 1, line 76 (1598).

At the Cardinal's hat,  
 They shoot all at that.  
 Out of their strong towns  
 They shoot at him with crowns;  
 With crowns of gold enblased  
 They make him so amazed,  
 And his eyen so dazed,  
 That he ne see can  
 To know God nor man.

Thereafter, through a thousand lines the gibes patter upon the "Red Hat" as innumerable and remorseless as hailstones, rising (or perhaps sinking) to such invocations as the following:

He would dry up the streams  
 Of nine kings' realms,  
 All rivers and wells,  
 All waters that swells;  
 For with us he so mells [meddles]  
 That within England dwells,  
 I would he were somewhere else;  
 For else by and by  
 He will drink us so dry,  
 And suck us so nigh,  
 That men shall scanty  
 Have penny or halfpenny.  
 God save his noble grace,  
 And grant him a place  
 Endless to dwell  
 With the devil of hell!

*Skelton's  
 Reconcilia-  
 tion with  
 Wolsey*

There is no reason for doubting the tradition that this poem was written from the relative security of sanctuary at Westminster. The wonder is that Skelton ever emerged from sanctuary; yet if the dating of recent critics is correct, as it seems to be, he was writing his *Garland of Laurel* from Sherriff-Hutton Castle a few months later in a spirit of great self-complacency "and calm of mind, all passion spent." He dedicated *The Garland of Laurel* to Wolsey, as has been said, and also his flyting, *The Doughty Duke of Albany*, of the same year, 1523; and in 1528 he produced under the cardinal's formal patronage his *Replication* against the Cambridge heretics. The situation does no great credit perhaps to Skelton's consistency or courage—though neither of these requires defense; but it suggests shrewd broad-mindedness in Wolsey. One might recall the anecdote concerning Pope's lines on "Atticus." "I sent the verses to Mr. Addison," said Pope, "and he used me very civilly ever after."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Skelton had imitators, of course. *Read Me and Be not Wroth*, a long riming satire in dialogue form, appears to be the work of William Roy and Jerome Barlow, abjured Franciscans who were associated with Tyndale on the Continent. Printed in Strassburg, 1528, and in London, 1546, it attacks Wolsey and his hierarchy with a good deal of wit. It is reprinted by E. Arber (*English Reprints*, 1871). Coarser examples of Skeltonizing verse are *Jill of Brentford's*

Alexander  
Barclay

The blazing originality of Skelton finds no parallel in the other great satirist of the age. Alexander Barclay<sup>20</sup> (c. 1475-1552), who decried the heterodoxy of the Rector of Diss and was himself an orthodox priest, likewise followed the old models in style, and for his subjects preferred to recast and amplify Continental works. His first (not positively authenticated) production was a translation in rime royal of a very recent French allegory by Pierre Gringoire, *The Castle of Labor*,<sup>21</sup> of which both Pynson and Wynkyn de Worde printed editions in 1505-1506. He later translated Sallust, a life of St. George, and a Latin poem on the four cardinal virtues by Dominicus Mancinus, the latter under the pleasant title of *The Mirror of Good Manners*.<sup>22</sup> At the command of the Duke of Norfolk—for through his long life Barclay seems never to have lacked important patrons—he compiled an elementary book on French, *The Introductory to Write and to Pronounce French* (1521), which has value today chiefly as a guide to the contemporary pronunciation of English.

Whether Barclay was English or Scotch by origin, and which of the universities, if any, he attended, are still debated questions.<sup>23</sup> He is first heard of far in the southwest of England, at Samuel Taylor Coleridge's birthplace, Ottery St. Mary, near Exeter. In 1508 he was chaplain of the college there, and in that place made his translation of Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools*, which Pynson printed the next year. Barclay professes to use three versions of his original: Brant's "in plain and common speech of Doche," another in French, and J. Locher's in Latin elegiacs. It is the last that he mainly depends upon, but he has no notion of translating closely, and frankly says so. He retains Brant's woodcut illustrations, which gave the poem much of its appeal, but often alters the chapter captions and greatly increases the length, so that 310 pages in Brant become 650 in Barclay. The enlargement is partly due to substitution of the rime royal for Brant's compacter tetrameter couplets, but it mainly arises from the fact that Barclay is a more concrete writer than Brant, and is intent upon localizing the fools in England, which he does so effectively that few would have believed his book of foreign origin, had he not so candidly confessed it. When something in Brant is inapplicable to England, he omits it or inserts a *Caveat*; e.g., in the chapter

*Testament* by Robert Copland (ed. F. J. Furnivall, 1871); and a "treatise" on beards by a certain Barnes, which bears the pseudonym of Colin Clout (ed. Furnivall, *EETSSES*, 10, 1870). Later political rimes in Skelton's metre (sometimes claiming his authorship) include *Doctor Double-Ale*, *Vox Populi Vox Dei*, and *A Poor Help*. The first two are Protestant in tone; the last, which dates from the opening of Mary's reign, Catholic. All three are found in W. C. Hazlitt, *Early Popular Poetry*, III (1866), 249-321.

<sup>20</sup> See T. H. Jamieson, *The Ship of Fools* (2v, 1874); B. White, *The Eclogues of Alexander Barclay* (1928; *EETS*, 175); C. H. Herford, *Studies in the Literary Relations of England and Germany*, Ch. vi; J. M. Berdan, *Early Tudor Poetry*, pp. 237-256; R. W. Bond, "Brant's *Das Narrenschiff*" in *Studia Otiosa* (1938), pp. 18-42.

<sup>21</sup> Facsimile, ed. A. W. Pollard (Roxburghe Club, Edinburgh, 1905). Barclay's translation is not to be confused with a long original poem by William Nevill, *The Castle of Pleasure*, printed about 1518.

<sup>22</sup> Reprinted, Spenser Soc. (1885). For the later translation of this poem by Turberville (1568) see below, Part II, ch. 1, n. 35.

<sup>23</sup> See W. Nelson, "New Light on Alexander Barclay," *RES*, xix (1943), 59-61.

"Of night-watchers and beaters of the streets, playing by night on instruments and using like follies, when time is to rest":

Though I have touched of this enormity  
 In English tongue, yet is it not so used  
 In this Royalme as it is beyond the sea;  
 Yet much we use which ought to be refused.  
 Of great night-watching we may not be excused,  
 But our watching is in drunken gluttony  
 More than in singing or other melody.

He commonly adds an *envoy* of his own ("Barclay to the Fools," or "The Envoy of Barclay") to what he finds in his source, and usually differentiates this by the use of the Monk's Tale stanza. He grows more independent as he proceeds, and at the end of his book diverges very widely from Brant. The printer nobly put up with this copiousness, but not without some alarm, for quite early in the work Barclay summons one group aboard in the following words:

Come to our ship; our anchors are in-weighed;  
 By right and law ye may challenge a stage.  
 To you of [i.e., by] Barclay it shall not be denied,  
 Howbeit the charge Pynson hath on me laid,  
 With many fools our navy not to charge.

*Imitations  
 of The Ship  
 of Fools*

The anonymous poem, *Cock Lorell's Boat*, seems to be an imitation of *The Ship of Fools*. It exists in a single undated and fragmentary copy of about four hundred lines from the press of Wynkyn de Worde.<sup>24</sup> Cock Lorell receives into his vessel a minutely itemized company of all the reprobates in London.

Than [i.e., then] Cock weighed anchor and housed [hoisted] his sail,  
 And forth he rowed without fail;  
 They sailed England through and through,  
 Village, town, city, and borough.

*Robert  
 Copland*

This piece has a certain rude vigor, but no humor or specific satire. It is referred to, and is itself imitated, in a much longer poem, *The Highway to the Spital-house*,<sup>25</sup> written by Robert Copland and published by him about 1535. Here Copland, who introduces himself as one of the interlocutors, receives from the porter of a London hospital a report, sometimes gruesome and sometimes moralistic, on all the different types brought to the institution by disease, crime, or penury. The details are valuable, but the tone is harsh, and the description leaves one uncertain whether the place should be thought of in modern terms as prison, almshouse, or sanatorium. The classifying and satiric method of the *Ship of Fools*, and similar woodcut illustrations, are found in the thirty-nine chapters of *The First Booke of the*

<sup>24</sup> Reprinted by E. F. Rimbult (Percy Society, 1843).

<sup>25</sup> Reprinted in A. V. Judges, *The Elizabethan Underworld* (1930), pp. 1-25. See W. G. Moore, "Robert Copland and his *Hye Way*," *RES*, vii (1931). 406-418.

*Introduction of Knowledge* (1542) by the amusing physician-traveler, Andrew Borde<sup>26</sup> (c. 1490-1549), in which doggerel descriptions of the various races of men are followed by articles in prose on their countries, manners, currency, and languages. Andrew  
Borde

Shortly after the printing of *The Ship of Fools*, it appears that Barclay left Devonshire and became a monk at Ely. His *Eclogues*, which are the earliest in English poetry, were published about 1515 with a prologue explaining that at the age of "forty year save twain" he had had the fortune to find his youth again, that is to discover a little "treatise" that he had compiled long before. This testimony, suggestive of Sir Walter Scott's experience with the manuscript of *Waverley*, is corroborated by topical allusions which indicate that portions of the *Eclogues* were written shortly after 1500,<sup>27</sup> and therefore before the *Ship of Fools*, and other portions very near the date of publication. The verse form is a somewhat stiff but metrical riming couplet, changing to the Monk's Tale eight-line stanza in the "ditties" of Eclogue 4.<sup>28</sup> Barclay acknowledges as his model in this pastoral style a recent humanist poet of Italy to whom Shakespeare also offered tribute, Barclay's  
Eclogues

the most famous Baptist Mantuan,  
The best of that sort since poets first began.

The fourth and fifth eclogues—on rich men and poets and the citizen and the countryman respectively—are in fact lengthened imitations of the fifth and sixth eclogues of Mantuanus. Barclay's first three eclogues, on the miseries of courtiers, derive their material from the Latin prose of Æneas Silvius (1405-1464), the noted scholar who became Pope Pius II.

Barclay is a master of detail and of homely wisdom. The dialogue between his shepherds is vigorously handled, and often has a tang of the British soil, e.g.,

But trust me, Corydon, there is diversity  
Between to have riches and riches to have thee;

A small sparkle may kindle love, certain,  
But scantily Severn may quench it clean again;

Our Lord destroyed five cities for outrage;  
Read where for sin He wasted one village.

The most striking passage is the long and horrid description of court table manners in Eclogue 2, which goes far beyond its original in Æneas Silvius;

<sup>26</sup> Ed. F. J. Furnivall (1870; *EETSES*, 10). Borde—who sometimes spelled his name Boorde and punningly Latinized it as "Andreas Perforatus"—is also the author of two entertaining medical works in the style of Elyot: *A Dietary of Health* and *The Breviary of Health*. He has been uncertainly credited with compiling several jestbooks, e.g., *The Merry Tales of the Mad Men of Gotham* and *Scoggin's Jests*.

<sup>27</sup> I.e., laments on the deaths of Cardinal Morton and Bishop Alcock of Ely. Both died in 1500. See especially Eclogue 3, lines 457-508.

<sup>28</sup> The longer of these, "The description of the tower of virtue and honor," is an elegy on the death of Sir Edward Howard in 1513.

but Barclay has many pleasant bits as well—e.g., the admirably told fable of God's gifts to Eve's children<sup>29</sup> and the pretty vignettes of winter amusements.<sup>30</sup> He follows his sources, but his work is everywhere "circumstantiated" (as Lamb said of Sidney's sonnets) by references to current English affairs.<sup>31</sup>

John  
Heywood

John Heywood<sup>32</sup> (c. 1497-c. 1580), whose wife was Sir Thomas More's niece and whose grandson was John Donne, is one of the most genial and rational of satirists. Neither a humanist nor a reformer by temperament, he was content to be a professional entertainer to three courts, and though forced to a public recantation in the hectic last years of Henry VIII (1544), he neither changed nor stressed unduly his good-natured Catholicism. He wisely avoided trouble during the reign of Edward VI, stood very high in favor under Queen Mary, and early in Elizabeth's reign abandoned England for Catholic Belgium, where he died at a very advanced age.

His Songs

The songs for which he was famous have been ill preserved and are not always well authenticated, but enough exist to give the measure of a very likable personality. The best known is the one on Queen Mary, printed anonymously by Tottel, but said in one version to have been written by Heywood when the princess was eighteen (1534):

Give place, you ladies, and be gone!  
Boast not yourselves at all;  
For here at hand approacheth one  
Whose face will stain you all.

He seems to have written the earliest version of the willow song that Desdemona sings, with the line,

For all a green willow is my garland.

His most passionate lyrics are directed at social transgressors, as in this stanza against slanderers:

Christ cri'th out still,  
"Say good for ill";  
But we say harm for harm.  
Yea, ill for good  
Ill tongues do brood,  
Wrath is in them so warm!

or another against idlers,

The proud man may be patient,  
The ireful may be liberal,  
The gluttonous may be continent,

<sup>29</sup> Eclogue 5, lines 237-396.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 87-106.

<sup>31</sup> See J. R. Schultz, "The Method of Barclay's Eclogues," *JEGP*, xxxii (1933), 549-571.

<sup>32</sup> See R. de la Bère, *John Heywood: Entertainer* (1937); R. W. Bolwell, *The Life and Works of John Heywood* (1921); J. M. Berdan, *Early Tudor Poetry*, pp. 102-116. For Heywood as a dramatist see below, ch. v.

The covetous may give alms all,  
 The lecher may to prayer fall:  
 Each vice bideth *some* good business  
 Save only idle idleness.

Jollity and good company are what he likes. A dainty song of welcome ends with the pleasant line,

Your welcome is here your best dish,

and another says,

Man hardly hath a richer thing  
 Than honest mirth.<sup>33</sup>

Heywood's only extended satire, apart from his plays, is *The Spider and the Fly* (1556). It is very extended indeed, for a most trivial incident, the imprisonment of a fly in a cobweb, is developed into a poem in rime royal which is nearly as long as *Paradise Lost* and nearly as argumentative as *The Ring and the Book*. The printer of the only edition increased the reader's trouble by over-lavish use of colons in the most uncalled-for places.<sup>34</sup> Students who surmount these obstacles find it an amusing and highly intelligent work. The plot, which culminates in a mass engagement between armies of flies and spiders, evidently was suggested by the pseudo-Homeric battle of the frogs and mice, a very popular classic in the sixteenth century; and it ends, with the death of the spider, in a scene that recalls the close of the *Aeneid* and has a good deal of dignity. That is, *The Spider and the Fly* is not simply a mock epic; it is rather, as Heywood called it, a parable, an allegorical comment on contemporary conditions, developed mainly by dialogue and debate.<sup>35</sup>

The author's conclusion explains that he had begun the poem more than twenty years before and had left it unworked at for over nineteen. It seems, then, that Heywood conceived the plan, and wrote most of the work, about the time of More's death in 1535, as an outlet for his feelings; but naturally found it indiscreet to publish till the accession of Mary enabled him to add the dénouement, in which the servant maid, typifying the Queen herself, enters with her broom to liberate the imprisoned fly and judicially crush the spider, who can now be clearly equated with Archbishop Cranmer.<sup>36</sup> In a general way, the flies represent the simple people of England, who are Catholic, and the spiders the new wealthy classes, who are Protestant; but the satire is nowhere bitter and is not primarily religious. Heywood was humanist enough to love debate and intellectual dexterity for their own

<sup>33</sup> Texts of many songs by Heywood are in the manuscript which contains Redford's play, *Wit and Science*. It was edited for the Shakespeare Society by J. O. Halliwell (1848).

<sup>34</sup> The best reprint is that of the Spenser Society (1894) which contains an admirable introduction by A. W. Ward. See also J. Haber, *John Heywood's "The Spider and the Fly"* (Berlin, 1900) which argues for a different date of composition from the one here assumed.

<sup>35</sup> For the possibly direct influence of this poem upon Swift's *Battle of the Books* see J. W. McCain, Jr., "Swift and Heywood," *N&Q*, CLXVIII (1935), 236-238.

<sup>36</sup> Cranmer was burned at the stake, after a long trial, in March, 1556.



sake. During the first half of the poem, which reads dully today, the disputation is mainly a huge, ingenious parody of the ways of lawyers. The spider and fly, with their learned counsel (ant and butterfly, respectively), chop logic interminably, and finally reach the conclusion that everything is just as it was before. Then the action takes an epic turn with the appearance of armies of flies and spiders, and the Pilgrimage of Grace uprising (1536) is analyzed with reference to such economic and modern questions as the effect of rising price levels upon the different classes of society (chapter 44). The spiders are here the capitalists and the flies the laborers. Heywood is sympathetic to all except the "neuters" in each class, who act not by conviction but from opportunism (chapter 63). At the end this devout Catholic welcomes the Queen less as the restorer of the church than as the creator of order, and puts into her mouth just the sentiment with which Coleridge closes his *Ancient Mariner*:

spiders and flies are the creatures of God,  
And all his creatures, in their creation good,  
I know and acknowledge . . .  
I hate neither the spiders' nor the flies' brood,  
I love all, as behoveth maidenly mood.  
All his creatures in an order we must love,  
That orderly use themselves as doth behove.<sup>37</sup>

"Misorder" was the crime of the Reformation in Heywood's view, and was detrimental to all classes:

Spiders and flies have lived like as in hell,  
Since new disorder did th' old order expel.

Now, ironically enough at the beginning of the Marian massacres, he sees order restored and urges clemency even to the memories of such innovators as Cromwell and Somerset:

Touching deeds and deaths of those that so past be,  
Let us rather (when memory them to mind calls)  
Lament their false facts [i.e., deeds] than rejoice their foul falls.

*Heywood's*  
Epigrams  
and  
Proverbs

In spite of the delightful woodcuts, which make it one of the quaintest picture books in the world, *The Spider and the Fly* had few readers and no open admirers after the accession of Elizabeth. It was "Heywood the Epigrammatist" that the later age admired, "who," as Puttenham said,<sup>38</sup> "for the mirth and quickness of his conceits, more than for any good learning was in him, came to be well benefited by the King" (i.e., Edward VI). Possibly the good learning that was missed was orthodox Protestant doctrine, for Heywood was reputed to have studied at Oxford and alludes familiarly to that university. His are said to be the first epigrams in English, and were

<sup>37</sup> Ch. 95, p. 440. Compare "He prayeth well, who loveth well both man and bird and beast," etc.

<sup>38</sup> *The Art of English Poesy* (1589), ch. 31.



produced by him literally in hundreds.<sup>39</sup> They are not very mirth-provoking—few epigrams are; but they distinguish themselves from most of those that followed by their good temper. The author asserts,

In all my simple writing never meant I  
To touch any private person displeasingly.

This is true. He is seldom more savage than in the following, which if "displeasing," is certainly redeemed by its pungency and wit:

'God is no botcher.' But when God wrought you two,  
God wrought as like a botcher as God might do.<sup>40</sup>

They are the merest trifles, but throw revealing lights upon the London of his day; e.g., its odors:

But for blemish of a face to look upon,  
I doubt which were best, to have a nose or none.  
Most of our saviors are more sour than sweet:  
A nose or no nose, which is now most meet? <sup>41</sup>

or the women's fashions:

Alas! poor fardingales must lie in the street:  
To house them no door in the city made meet.  
Since at our narrow doors they in cannot win,  
Send them to Oxford, at Broadgates <sup>42</sup> to get in.

Three hundred of Heywood's epigrams, including one quoted above, are based on proverbs. Something in his homely nature warmed to what he called "our common, plain, pithy proverbs old," and he made himself their great exponent and collector. That they could be built into coherent contemporary satire he shows in one of his most ingenious poems, *A Dialogue Containing the Number in Effect of All the Proverbs in the English Tongue, Compact in a Matter Concerning Two Manner of Marriages*, of which four editions appeared between 1546 and 1561.<sup>43</sup> In this grimly realistic piece the author's advice is sought by a young man who has it in his power to marry either an elderly rich widow or a penniless maid. The referee recounts with much liveliness and detail the bleak experiences of his two neighbors, each of whom has been gored on one of the horns of this matrimonial dilemma, and the client resolves to forgo both his opportunities. The poem, which extends to about a hundred pages and has merit both as narrative and as social photography, is so pieced together with current proverbs as to be a mosaic, and it is a chief storehouse for students of the folk wisdom of the age.

<sup>39</sup> Reprinted, Spenser Society (1867).

<sup>40</sup> *Epigrams upon Proverbs*, No. 62.

<sup>41</sup> *The First Hundred of Epigrams*, No. 31, "Of a nose."

<sup>42</sup> I.e., Broadgates Hall. *The Fifth Hundred of Epigrams*, No. 55, "Of fardingales."

<sup>43</sup> Ed. J. S. Farmer (1906).

# V

## The Interlude

From  
Morality to  
Interlude

The first impression that the student receives in passing from the fifteenth-century morality to the Tudor interlude<sup>1</sup> is one of sudden light. He passes from a species preserved in the scantiest examples to one so copiously illustrated that coherent brief discussion is impossible; from a drama wholly anonymous and (except *Mankind*) unlocalized, to plays heavily charged with London realism and to a large extent written by figures of definite historical importance; from a drama based upon the abstractions of the universal medieval church to one that is above all things topical, mundane, and aristocratic.

Medwall,  
Fulgens and  
Lucrece

At the very outset we meet the first positively known English dramatist in Henry Medwall, chaplain to Cardinal Morton, and the first play to introduce a central love-theme and to provide definite information concerning the place, date, and circumstances of its production. Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucrece*, as A. W. Reed appears to have shown,<sup>2</sup> was first acted in Lambeth Palace at Christmas, 1497, to grace an entertainment for Flemish and Spanish ambassadors. It is divided into two parts, the first presented at the end of the midday dinner, the second later the same evening, and is thus literally a pair of interludes in the feasting. The main plot handles the marriage problem of Lucrece, a Roman heiress, who decides for the suitor of worth but lowly origin against the blue-blooded waster. This theme, without the romantic dénouement, came from a Renaissance dialogue which Caxton had printed in 1481.<sup>3</sup> Medwall adds effective low comedy in the lady's maid and in the servants of the lovers, who, though only algebraically

<sup>1</sup> The term *interlude*, of disputed origin, soon after 1500 began to replace the term *moral play* or *morality*, of which type the interlude is the historical successor. Though usually implying abstract figures and ethical symbols, the interlude was not limited to these, and in popular usage the word came to cover any sort of play. Texts (of varying critical value) of most of the interludes mentioned in this chapter will be found in one or another of the following collections: A. Brandl, *Quellen des weltlichen Dramas in England vor Shakespeare* (Strassburg, 1898; *Quellen und Forschungen*, 80); W. Bang, *Materialien zur Kunde des älteren englischen Dramas* (Louvain); J. S. Farmer, *Students' Facsimile Series; Malone Society Reprints*. Some few are also in the Dodsley-Hazlitt *Select Collection of Old English Plays*, J. M. Manly's *Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama* (2v, 1897), and J. Q. Adams' *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas* (1924). For general discussion see T. Brooke, *The Tudor Drama* (1911), chs. III and IV, and F. S. Boas, *An Introduction to Tudor Drama* (Oxford, 1933).

<sup>2</sup> See *Fulgens and Lucres*, ed. F. S. Boas and A. W. Reed (Oxford, 1926); and A. W. Reed, *Early Tudor Drama* (1926), ch. IV. There is brief discussion in J. K. Lowers, "High Comedy Elements in Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucres*," *ELH*, VIII (1941), 103-106.

<sup>3</sup> This was a translation of Buonaccorso's Ciceronian imitation, *De Nobilitate Controversia* (1428). In Germany, a little after Medwall's time, the same work served as source for Sixt Birck's first play, *De Vera et Falsa Nobilitate*.

distinguished as "A" and "B", are already clear forerunners of Shakespeare's Launce and Speed.

Medwall's other play, *Nature*, probably a little earlier in date, is certainly so in type, for it presents the history of "Man" from childhood to old age, his dalliance with the Seven Deadly Sins, and ultimate repentance. It has also the device, which was repeated *ad nauseam* in later interludes, of having the vices masquerade under well sounding pseudonyms, e.g., Pride as "Worship," etc. However, the moral subject is humanistically treated. Nature, the dominating power under God almighty, is an Aristotelian goddess, and she bids Man make the journey of life under the joint guidance of Reason and Sensuality. The latter is necessary to him,

Medwall's  
Nature

For if there be in him no manner of feeling,  
Nor no lively quickness, what lord is he?  
A lord made of clouts, or carved out of tree.

His sins result from deserting the *via media*, and his leanings to the side of sensuality are dramatized with pagan and realistic vigor. This play also was performed in two parts, with an indicated interval of about three days between them.

Mundus, the world, has an imposing though slight part in *Nature* as the rival force to that goddess and leader of the non-philosophical and hence subversive influences. He appears more prominently in *Mundus et Infans* ("The World and the Child"), printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1522. The subject of this anonymous play resembles that of *Nature*, man's adventures along the primrose path from infancy to old age; but progress is marked in its greater compactness, smoother metre, and in the more picturesque development of the London background. Similar qualities are found in another interlude of unknown authorship that Wynkyn printed, *Hick-Scorner*,<sup>4</sup> and in lower degree in *John the Evangelist*. In both the last the realistic adornment has so corroded the moral structure as to leave the plot unintelligible. In the somewhat later *Interlude of Youth* and *Lusty Juventus* contemporary youth seduced by vice is likewise treated, and the waning moral interest is replaced by doctrinal preaching, Catholic in the former and Protestant in the latter.

The World  
and the  
Child and  
Related  
Interludes

In *Wit and Science* John Redford, who was a poet and musician of importance and teacher of singing in St. Paul's (c. 1530), introduced a timely adaptation by substituting an educational motive for the original moral purpose of the interlude. He presents the adventures of young Wit, who desires to wed the Lady Science, daughter of Reason and Experience.<sup>5</sup> It is the romance of the humanist mind, the mating of natural ability with learning. To prove his worthiness Wit must make a pilgrimage to Mount

John  
Redford

<sup>4</sup> *Hick-Scorner* is perhaps the earliest printed English play; see W. W. Greg, "Notes on Some Early Plays," *Library*, xi (1930-31). 44; and *A Bibliography of The English Printed Drama to The Restoration*, i (1939). 81.

<sup>5</sup> This plot is derived from the well known fifth-century schoolbook by Martianus Capella, *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*.

Parnassus and overcome the giant Tediousness which besets its slopes. Attended by Instruction, Study, and Diligence, he adventures upon the curriculum and suffers all the collegiate discomfitures before he slays the giant and receives his diploma in the person of the lady. Redford has some scenes of amusing but long drawn out farce, some rather neat psychological demonstrations, and, since he had his singing boys at command, some songs of unusual complexity. The play was not printed, but must have had influence, since it was followed by two imitations: *The Marriage of Wit and Science* (c. 1569) and *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom* (c. 1579).

John Rastell

John Rastell (c. 1475-1536), a lawyer of distinction and member of Parliament, was a man of wide humanist interests and multifarious activities. He set up a printing press about 1515 and printed the only edition of *Fulgens and Lucrece*. He also printed a similar piece, *A New Comedy in English in Manner of an Enterlude*, which, as he gave it no preciser title, has in modern times been named *Calisto and Melebea* from the chief characters. It is largely translated from the famous Spanish "tragicomedy" *Celestina* (1499), or rather from the early sections of that long work, but it rejects the consummation and tragic consequences of the original love story and closes in a way which is artistically unacceptable but entirely in the spirit of the Tudor interludes. At the moment when the clever bawd, Celestina, has persuaded Melebea to listen to Calisto's suit, the girl's father is brought in to relate a nightmare he has had concerning her. Melebea recognizes the warning, interprets the dream:

Calisto and  
Melebea

The foul pit whereof ye dreamed, which hath  
Destroyed so many, betokeneth vice and sin,  
In which, alas, I had almost fallen in,

The Nature  
of the Four  
Elements

and lives happily ever after. Thus a play which gives promise of being an early *Troilus and Cressida* ends with an admonition to virgins and in the last lines is further diverted into an argument that the bringers-up of children should give them good practical educations and the lawgivers concern themselves with remedial rather than punitive legislation. Rastell claims only to be the publisher of this piece, but may have written it. He is more certainly the author of the interlude of *The Nature of the Four Elements*, "declaring many proper points of philosophy natural, and of divers strange lands, and of divers strange effects and causes," which is a dramatized lecture on recent discoveries in science and geography, incorporating Rastell's own experiences with some piratical seamen who balked his effort to explore Newfoundland in 1517.<sup>6</sup>

John  
Heywood

Rastell's wife was the sister of Sir Thomas More, and their daughter Joan married John Heywood<sup>7</sup> (c. 1497-c. 1580). Mores, Rastells, and Heywoods

<sup>6</sup> See A. W. Reed, *Early Tudor Drama*, p. 12; G. B. Parks, "The Geography of the *Interlude of the Four Elements*," *PQ*, xvii (1938). 251-262; M. E. Borish, "Source and Intention of *The Four Elements*," *SP*, xxxv (1938). 149-163; E. M. Nugent, "Sources of John Rastell's *The Nature of the Four Elements*," *PMLA*, lvii (1942). 74-88.

<sup>7</sup> For Heywood's nondramatic works see the previous chapter.

lived together in great harmony and in an intellectual comradeship which somewhat complicates the distribution of literary property. More was interested in drama and is traditionally reported to have had a hand in the production of interludes, as Rastell had; but Heywood, who from 1519 was employed at court as a musician, was the special playwright of the group and the most gifted of all interlude composers. Seven plays make up the conventional Heywood canon:<sup>8</sup> (1) *Witty and Witless*; (2) *Gentleness and Nobility*; (3) *John-John the Husband, Tib his Wife, and Sir John the Priest*; (4) *The Play of Love*; (5) *The Pardoner and the Friar, the Curate, and Neighbor Pratte*; (6) *The Four P's*; and (7) *The Play of the Weather*. *The Heywood Canon*

Heywood was not a dramatic poet; he has no emotional scenes or high-flown descriptions. He was a court entertainer and emphasizes two qualities, liveliness of action and witty dialogue. He commenced at the foot of the dramatic ladder, the two simplest pieces in the list being no more than debates on a set subject. In *Witty and Witless*, which was presented before Henry VIII, and which might be called "The Three J's," James argues a rather thick-headed John into admitting that it is better to be a fool than a wise man; whereupon Jerome enters (replacing James) and forces John to confess the opposite.<sup>9</sup> In *Gentleness and Nobility*, after a merchant and a knight have disputed which is the better gentleman, a plowman comes forward and proves more than a match for them both.<sup>10</sup> *John-John* introduces the method of French farce, and with it much more action and obscenity.<sup>11</sup> There are still but three characters, all social types, the husband, the wife, the priest; but the dramatist can move them separately, not as before in groups of two, and he can make them act out a story in several scenes.

Four characters are employed in the next three plays, with a steady increase in dramatic effectiveness. In *Love* they are set up formally in a sort of psychological parallelogram, and the play between Lover-loved, Lover-not-loved, Neither-lover-nor-loved, and Beloved-not-loving proceeds rather like a chess game. In the *Pardoner and Friar* there is no formality and what debate there is is carried on by dint of shouts and fisticuffs to a most effective conclusion. In the great *Four P's* Heywood handles the same number of

<sup>8</sup> J. S. Farmer, *The Dramatic Writings of John Heywood* (1905), offers a careless text. *Weather* and *John-John* are well edited by A. W. Pollard in C. M. Gayley's *Representative English comedies*, Vol. 1 (1903), *The Four P's* in the collections of J. M. Manly and J. Q. Adams cited above, and *The Play of the Weather* by K. W. Cameron (Raleigh, N. C., 1941). For discussion of Heywood's claim to these plays see A. W. Reed, *op. cit.*, ch. v, and H. N. Hillebrand, "On the Authorship of the Interludes attributed to John Heywood," *MP*, xiii (1915), 267-280.

<sup>9</sup> See K. W. Cameron, *The Background of John Heywood's Witty and Witless* (Raleigh, N. C., 1941), which includes a bibliography of Heywood scholarship.

<sup>10</sup> *Gentleness and Nobility* is now commonly ascribed to Rastell's authorship, largely because it contains some close parallels of thought and wording with Rastell's prose works; see Reed, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-112. Perhaps Rastell contributed these portions, or perhaps they are not too close for a son-in-law to have written. The play as a whole seems to be in Heywood's manner, and Rastell does not claim to have written it. His colophon says, "Johēs rastell me fieri fecit," which is just the phrase Caxton used to describe his relation to the *Morte Darthur*.

<sup>11</sup> See K. Young, "The Influence of French Farce upon the Plays of John Heywood," *MP*, xi (1904), 97-124.

The Four  
P's, The  
Play of the  
Weather

figures with still more remarkable skill and vivacity. *The Four P's* is his wittiest play; his cleverest is *Weather*, in which he equates the inability of men to agree upon the best weather with their similar incapacity for pronouncing in matters of government and religion. Ten characters are here charmingly activated and contrasted, wisdom and rime royal being the exclusive prerogatives of Jupiter, who is obviously King Henry VIII.

Heywood was immensely interested in the motions of the mind, and not at all in the movements of the heart. His characters are all types, but they owe next to nothing to the morality. The only two "vices" in his plays<sup>12</sup> are that in name merely, and the only two virtues he emphasizes are tolerance and humor. He developed naturalness in entrances, exits, and stage business beyond anything previously seen in the English theatre, and drilled the wooden lines of the old interludes till in the best parts of *The Four P's* and *Weather* they approach the plasticity of Coleridge's *Christabel*.<sup>13</sup>

The  
Political  
Interlude:  
Skelton's  
Magnifi-  
cence

Three great literary insurgents—Skelton, Bale, and Sir David Lindsay—shaped the hitherto harmless or gently edifying interlude into an offensive weapon. Skelton's *Magnificence* (c. 1516) is the earliest; it has the structure of a moral play, but its teaching is political. A well-meaning and prosperous prince is beguiled into accepting four dissolute councilors, who lead him into evil ways and allow him to be robbed. Adversity overwhelms him, and Poverty reminds him that fortune is unstable. His overthrow is so complete that Despair and Mischief have almost succeeded in bringing him to suicide when Good Hope snatches away the knife and other virtues teach him to recover his state by abandoning wanton excess. The warning was timely in the years that preceded the Field of the Cloth of Gold (1520), but the opposition to Wolsey's influence is as yet more general than particular.<sup>14</sup>

John Bale

John Bale<sup>15</sup> (1495-1563) is Heywood's converse in most things, and next to him the most original writer of interludes. He was an exacerbated, not to say bilious, proponent of the Reformation, and used the stage as a vehicle for propaganda. He translated the famous anti-papal *Pammachius* of the Lutheran Kirchmayer, and turned sections of the Bible story into pious

<sup>12</sup> Merry Report in *Weather* and Neither-lover-nor-loved in *Love*.

<sup>13</sup> There is hardly sufficient evidence to date Heywood's plays with precision, or even to set them in their relative order. For an interesting effort to do so see Wesley Phyl, "The Chronology of John Heywood's Plays," *ESL*, LXXIV (1940). 27-41. A stanza at the end of *Witty and Witless* indicates a date not earlier than 1521, when Henry VIII became Defender of the Faith. *John-John, Love, Pardoner and Friar*, and *Weather* were all first printed in 1533, and the tone of the last named play best fits the period when the divorce question was rife (1532-33), as also does a passage (line 636) alluding to the bad harvest of 1527, "How rain hath priced corn within this seven year." The decade, 1522-1532, very likely covered Heywood's entire dramatic activity. He seems to have produced no more interludes after More's imprisonment and death.

<sup>14</sup> R. L. Ramsay's admirable edition (1908; *EETS*, 98) is still the standard work on *Magnificence*. Facsimile ed., J. S. Farmer, *Tudor Facsimile Texts* (1910). For another play, possibly by Skelton, see G. L. Frost and R. Nash, "Good Order: a Morality Fragment," *SP*, xli (1944). 483-491. Of Skelton's *Nigramansir* (*Necromancer*), of which Thomas Warton (*History of English Poetry*, section 33) saw a copy printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1504, and of which Warton gives an abstract, nothing more seems to be known.

<sup>15</sup> Texts in J. S. Farmer, *The Dramatic Writings of John Bale* (1907). See W. T. Davies, *A Bibliography of John Bale* (Oxford, 1939), which includes an extensive discussion of Bale's life and work; and J. W. Harris, *John Bale, A Study in the Minor Literature of the Reformation* (Urbana, 1940).

drama in *The Chief Promises of God, John Baptistes Preaching in the Wilderness*, and *The Temptation of Our Lord by Satan*. In his *Comedy Concerning Three Laws, of Nature, Moses, and Christ, Corrupted by the Sodomites, Pharisees, and Papists*, he uses the five-act structure and shows the anger, if not the art, of Aristophanes. All four of these plays are stated on title-page or colophon to have been "compiled in 1538," in which year Bale, who had been ejected from his pulpit for over-vehemence, appears to have been pleading his cause about the country with the help of a company of actors.

Bale's most valuable play, *King John*, was not printed and not known till a century ago, when the text of it was discovered at Ipswich, where the author had passed his latest years. The condition of this manuscript indicates that Bale composed it in the years before Cromwell's fall (in 1540) forced him to take flight to Germany, and returned to the attack, with elaborate amplification of the latter part, after Elizabeth's accession to the crown gave him another opportunity.<sup>16</sup> The text as we have it may have been intended for performance before the Queen when she visited Ipswich in August, 1561. The play is powerfully conceived, on coarse controversial lines, to arouse compassion for afflicted virtue in the persons of Widow England and her blind son Commonalty, and for King John whose courageous efforts to save them are foiled by agents of Rome. "There is no malice to the malice of the clergy," says Bale, and he declares that his purpose is to vindicate a patriot king from the Rome-inspired imputations of Polydore Vergil.<sup>17</sup> The individual characters do not much stand out, being blurred by Bale's quick transitions from allegory to history, for example, from Sedition as a vice to Sedition as a portrait of Stephen Langton; but the dreadful power of a malign foreign ideology over the superstitious and ignorant is set forth with blood-curdling effect. The cure, Bale hints, is in the "new learning," from which Sedition warns John's nobility to flee. "From the new learning!" says Nobility, "Marry, God of heaven save me! I never loved it of a child!" Distressed England is only relieved, after John has been murdered, when Verity enters with Imperial Majesty, and the play ends, in its revised form, with a benediction upon Elizabeth's labors for truth.

During just the period when Bale was writing *King John* his contemporary and fellow-Protestant, Sir David Lindsay, was producing his *Satire of the Three Estates* at the Scottish court.<sup>18</sup> It is a very long play, longer than any form of *Hamlet*. The performance took all day, and it is divided into two parts, with a break between them while "the people make collation." Lindsay had been the King's tutor, as Skelton had been Henry VIII's, and he employs the first part to recall his teachings. A young king, Rex Humanitas, is misled by vices under virtuous pseudonyms. Good Counsel cannot reach him; Verity, bearing a New Testament "in English tongue and printed in

*Bale's King John*

*Lindsay's Satire of the Three Estates*

<sup>16</sup> See the Malone Society edition of the play, ed. J. H. P. Pafford (Oxford, 1931).

<sup>17</sup> See above, ch. I.

<sup>18</sup> Acted before James V, Jan. 6, 1540, and elaborated for later performances, 1552, 1554. Text, ed. F. Hall (1869, 1883; *EETS*, 37).



England," is set in the stocks as a malefactress, and is soon joined there by Chastity, who can find no lodging in Scotland. Divine Correction, however, liberates them and rebukes the King, by whose authority a parliament is summoned.

This follows the formula of Medwall's *Nature* and of *Magnificence*, but the second part is highly original. John the Commonweal—Lindsay's pet name for the abused common people of Scotland—indicts his oppressors before the parliament of the three estates, i.e., the lords spiritual, the lords temporal, and the merchants. It is mainly the clergy that he attacks for their faults of greed, ignorance, sloth, and lechery; and one of the high points of the play is reached when John, challenged by spiritual lords to state his faith, simply repeats the Apostles' Creed, and the presiding judge, Correction (who wears angel's wings), remarks,

Say what ye will, sirs, by St. Anne,  
Methink John ane good Christian man.

Lindsay was a broader man than Bale. The comic divertissements that he inserts are often indescribably vulgar, but they are funny and effectively prove his points. On the other hand, he can be crushingly simple, as in the line,

Christ Jesus had no property but the gallows,

or in the retraction of the worldly prioress, who confesses that nuns are not necessary,

But I shall do the best I can,  
And marry some good honest man,  
And brew good ale and tun.  
Marriage by my opinion,  
It is better religion  
As [Than] to be friar or nun. (3669-74)

The parliament adopts fifteen acts which are the constitution of the reformed church of Scotland, and then the huge work ends with a sermon by the wise jester, Folly.

Respublica

The views that Bale and Lindsay attacked found dramatic defence in *Respublica*, an interlude constructed on the classical five-act pattern and probably written by Nicholas Udall, who had the special favor of Queen Mary.<sup>19</sup> It was written in 1553, "the first year of the most prosperous reign of our most gracious sovereign, Queen Mary the First," but was not printed till modern times. The fact is that, though termed "a merry interlude," *Respublica* shows little merriment except the underlying jubilation the author feels at the overthrow of the political party which had held power under Edward VI, and the pattern of the play is rather archaic. Five or six years ago (i.e., at the accession of Edward) "People," the English nation, was prosperous; but Conscience and Honesty were drowned "last year"; so *Respublica* falls under

<sup>19</sup> See L. Bradner, "A Test for Udall's Authorship," *MLN*, XLII (1927). 378-380.



the sway of the four Edwardian vices, Avarice, Insolence, Oppression, and Adulation, who call themselves Policy, Authority, Reformation, and Honesty. She and People are saved when the four heavenly virtues of Mercy, Truth, Peace, and Justice arrive with Nemesis and put an end to the malefactors' rule. The most interesting figure is People, who speaks a southwestern dialect described in another interlude<sup>20</sup> as "Cotswold speech." This, on the Elizabethan stage, became the favorite language for countrymen and is affected by Edgar in *King Lear*.

The interlude never reached again the position it had in Henry VIII's reign. It was properly a courtly and superficial product, not unrelated to the Jacobean masque, and like the latter dependant for much of its effect upon the brilliance of its social setting. It lost its gaiety when it became political, and soon lost its aristocratic clientele. After Bale it became an arena for the debate of current problems, and the unknown authors of *New Custom*, *Albion Knight*, *Wealth and Health*, *Impatient Poverty*, and *The Trial of Treasure* used it to air views which would now find their way into an economic or political quarterly. In its decay, however, it was extremely prolific, and it continued to be produced to the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign side by side with comedies, tragedies, and history plays, with all of which it was more or less contaminated. As the vicious characters came to be centred in a single Vice, whose pranks were mischievous rather than soul-destroying, and as the figures in general tended, like Heywood's, more to the class type than moral personification, many of these interludes approached farce or social comedy; e.g., Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like* (1568), George Wapull's *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* (1576), Thomas Lupton's *All for Money* (1578), and William Wager's *The Longer Thou Livest, the More Fool Thou Art*.<sup>21</sup> Since the authors were now largely schoolmasters or clergymen writing for bourgeois audiences, many of the later interludes deal with problems of incorrigible children such as the Continental dramatists were handling; e.g., the excellent *Nice Wanton* (1560), Thomas Ingelend's *Disobedient Child*, and George Gascoigne's *Glass of Government* (1577).

Sometimes, as in *The Conflict of Conscience* by Nathaniel Woodes (1581), the interlude is built around a recent event, in this case the religious apostasy of one Francis Spiera.<sup>22</sup> More often a stiffening for the wilted allegory is found by introducing stories from the Bible, classical literature, or even medieval fiction; as in *Godly Queen Hester* (1561), *King Darius* (1565), Lewis Wager's *Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene* (1566), Thomas Preston's *Cambises, King of Persia* (c. 1569), John Piker's *Interlude of Vice Containing the History of Orestes* (1567), R. B.'s *Appius and Virginia* (1575), John Phillip's *Patient and Meek Grissill* (c. 1565), and Thomas Garter's *Most Virtuous and Godly Susanna* (1578).

<sup>20</sup> William Wager's *Enough Is as Good as a Feast*, sig. E 1 (Huntington Library Facsimile Reprints, 1920).

<sup>21</sup> Dates in this section are dates of publication, not composition. Undated pieces were printed without date. Further details are given in T. Brooke, *The Tudor Drama*, chs. III and IV.

<sup>22</sup> See C. Wine, "Nathaniel Wood's *Conflict of Conscience*," *PMLA*, L (1935), 661-678.

*The Inter-  
lude in  
Decay*

236965

*A New Interlude for Children to Play Named Jack Juggler* (1562) shows how Plautus could be rewritten in the native fashion, while Robert Wilson's *Three Ladies of London* (1584), *Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (1590), and *Cobbler's Prophecy* (1594),<sup>23</sup> the anonymous *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamides* (1599), *Common Conditions* (1576), and particularly *A Knack to Know a Knaue* (1594) show how the interlude technique accommodated itself to plays of very different character. It was long before Englishmen found it unnatural to speak of any play as an "interlude," and still longer before stock interlude devices, such as evil powers disguising themselves as virtues or debating with angels for man's soul, and the Vice brandishing his dagger of lath or riding to hell on the devil's back,<sup>24</sup> ceased to be generally remembered. Two excellent things persisted in the interlude to the end of its dreary history and did much to keep theatre doors open while a more subtle drama was forming: even the dullest examples of the species are likely to be enlivened with good songs<sup>25</sup> and to offer oases of easily actable clownage.

<sup>23</sup> See K. H. Gatch, *Robert Wilson, Actor and Dramatist* (Yale, diss. unpub., 1928). Another play, *The Pedlar's Prophecy*, printed in 1595 (Malone Soc. reprint, 1914), is not by Wilson and refers to political events of about 1561. See G. L. Kittredge, "The Date of *The Pedlar's Prophecy*," *Harvard Studies & Notes in Phil. & Lit.*, xvi (1934), 97-118.

<sup>24</sup> Thus James Howell writes to Sir E. B. in 1635 that he "could be content to see an Anabaptist go to hell on a Brownist's back."

<sup>25</sup> See J. E. Bernard, *The Prosody of the Tudor Interlude* (New Haven, 1939) for the contributions of the interlude to dramatic verse form.

## VI

### Religious Prose

The only Bible in common use during the middle ages was the Latin "vulgate" text, which had been prepared by St. Jerome about the year 400. Wyclif's agitation for an English translation which the unlearned people could read was only the reiteration of a desire that had been recognized and partially satisfied in Anglo-Saxon times; but Wyclif antagonized the church authorities, and the association of the idea of an English Bible with Lollardry postponed the licensed production of such a thing for another century and a half.<sup>1</sup> It was Erasmus' great edition of the Greek New Testament (1516), largely prepared at Cambridge, which released the spring. This was a work of infinite labor and great intellectual courage; it offered a text much more authoritative than had previously existed and enriched it with new Latin annotations which piqued men's desire to know and explain what the Bible really meant.

*The Bible  
in English*

The first to undertake the translation of the Greek Testament into English was William Tyndale<sup>2</sup> (c. 1494-1536), a graduate of Oxford, who was moved by the study of Erasmus to go to Germany in 1524<sup>3</sup> and there devote himself to a task that the clerical authorities in England would in no way permit. In 1526 two editions of Tyndale's version of the New Testament had been smuggled into England and extensively circulated in defiance of a ban which the Bishop of London promptly laid upon them. Many copies were confiscated and burned, and persons responsible for their sale savagely punished. Sir Thomas More entered into an acrimonious pamphlet war with Tyndale,<sup>4</sup> who was driven, a hunted man, through various cities of Germany and the Netherlands. He translated also the five books of Moses and other parts of the Old Testament and issued a number of polemic tracts before he was arrested at Antwerp (May, 1535) and, after a long imprisonment, put to death at Vilvorde near Brussels in October, 1536.

*William  
Tyndale*

<sup>1</sup> See B. F. Westcott, *A General View of the History of the English Bible*, 3ed., revised by W. A. Wright (1905); C. C. Butterworth, *The Literary Lineage of the King James Bible, 1340-1611* (Philadelphia, 1941).

<sup>2</sup> See J. F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (1937); S. L. Greenslade, *The Work of William Tyndale*, with an Essay on Tyndale and the English Language by G. D. Bone (Glasgow, 1938); and an essay on Tyndale in R. W. Chambers, *Man's Unconquerable Mind* (1939), pp. 190-203. The 1534 text of Tyndale's New Testament has been edited by N. H. Wallis, with introduction by Isaac Foot (Cambridge, 1938).

<sup>3</sup> Luther's translation of the New Testament into German appeared in 1522. Tyndale probably visited him and may have received help from him.

<sup>4</sup> See W. E. Campbell, *The Dialogue concerning Tyndale by Sir Thomas More* (1927; reprinted in Vol. II of *English Works of Sir Thomas More*, 1931). More's *Dialogue* was printed in 1529. Tyndale replied in *An Answer unto Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* (1530), and More in *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* (1532; second part, 1533).

*Miles  
Coverdale*

*The Great  
Bible*

*The Geneva  
Bible*

*The  
Bishops'  
Bible*

The fate of Tyndale is marked by a tragic irony. While he was awaiting trial in the Low Countries, the situation of affairs in England reversed itself completely. His most vigorous assailant, Sir Thomas More, became himself a martyr in 1535, and King Henry VIII, from being the persecutor, grew for a time to be the patron of Bible translators. In this year 1535 Miles Coverdale (1488-1568) published the first complete English Bible with a flattering dedication to the King. It was made up of Tyndale's revised version of the New Testament and Pentateuch, essentially unchanged, to which Coverdale added his own translation of the remainder of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. It was printed, like all of Tyndale's works, on the Continent, but was allowed to circulate without restraint in England. In 1537 another edition of the Tyndale-Coverdale translation, revised by Tyndale's associate, John Rogers, was published with the King's special license;<sup>5</sup> and this was rapidly followed, in April, 1539, by the "Great Bible," revised by Coverdale, sumptuously printed in Paris and provided with a fine pictorial title-page that shows the King handing "Verbum Dei" to his subjects. The second edition of the Great Bible, in 1540, bore a statement on the title-page, "This is the Bible appointed to the use of the churches," and a long preface by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Cranmer), pointing out "what it availeth scripture to be had and read of the lay and vulgar people."

Seven editions of the Great Bible are recognized by bibliographers before the end of 1541, and there were many reprints. An independent revision of Tyndale and Coverdale by Richard Taverner had also appeared in 1539. The next English Bible was the famous Genevan version, prepared by Protestant exiles during the reign of Mary, one of whom was the indefatigable Coverdale.<sup>6</sup> They issued the New Testament from Geneva in 1557, and in 1560 the entire Bible, with a dedication to Queen Elizabeth, who had succeeded to the throne in the course of their work. This was a scholarly and well edited text; it has been often referred to as the "Breeches Bible" from its rather quaint rendering of Genesis 3:7:

Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed figtree leaves together and made themselves breeches.

It had practical advantages which served to make it vastly the most popular Bible during the Elizabethan period: it was much smaller in size than the large folios that preceded it, was printed in clear Roman type instead of black letter, inserted for the first time the now familiar numbering of verses in each chapter, added marginal explanatory notes and rather excellent woodcut illustrations and maps. It has been calculated that one hundred and forty editions of the Geneva Testament and Bible were printed. The official Bible for church reading during most of Queen Elizabeth's reign was, however, the Bishops' Bible, prepared by a group of ecclesiastical dignitaries under the

<sup>5</sup> This edition is ascribed to Thomas Matthew, perhaps a fictitious character.

<sup>6</sup> The leader of the group was William Whittingham. See H. Craig, Jr., "The Geneva Bible as a Political Document," *Pacific Hist. Rev.*, VII (1938). 40-49.

direction of the scholarly Archbishop Parker and first issued in 1568. The title-page bears the simple title, *The Holie Bible*, and a large portrait of the Queen. The Catholic English exiles, mainly Oxford and Cambridge scholars who had retired for religion's sake to Douai and Rheims, replied with a translation of their own, based upon the Latin vulgate text and accompanied by notes on doctrinal points. The New Testament in this version was printed at Rheims in 1582, and the entire Bible at Douai in 1609-10. This, naturally, is the Bible which most diverges from the text of Tyndale and Coverdale, though it has often accepted their phrasing, and it in turn, in the New Testament at least, had some influence upon the translators of the King James version.<sup>7</sup>

*The Douai  
Bible*

The King James Bible, or Authorized Version, was the accidental result of a petition submitted to the King immediately after his accession in 1603 by disaffected members of the Church of England, who hoped to secure religious changes along Presbyterian lines. The King summoned a conference of representative leaders at Hampton Court in January, 1604, at which much was discussed but little decided, except that the Bible should be once more revised, the King having, as it appeared, more prejudice against the Genevan version than his bishops had. He appointed fifty-four scholars, of whom we know the names of forty-seven, and these worked in six groups, two groups meeting in Westminster, two in Cambridge, and two in Oxford. They were instructed to be conservative, and they were very intelligently so, but they were thorough. Their Bible, first printed in 1611, is undoubtedly superior to any that had preceded it, and no later translation has seriously challenged its prestige. Writing in 1841, the author of *An Historical Account of the English Versions of the Scriptures*<sup>8</sup> said of it: "If a testimony were needed of the general excellence of this version, an appeal need only be made to the fact that it has maintained its ground for two hundred and thirty years." A century more has now passed, and it still maintains its ground.<sup>9</sup> It would be hard to instance another piece of large collective scholarship so successfully performed; but the primary credit for its greatness rests with Tyndale and Coverdale, and after them with the long series of ardent men, of whom King James's translators were the last, who for eighty years probed and polished its phrases.

*The King  
James Bible*

Tyndale and Coverdale are not only the originators of the modern English Bible; they are also the greatest literary artists connected with it. Whether they worked together over certain parts of it, as an ancient tradition states, is now doubted, and it is doubtful whether Coverdale had the classical learning of Tyndale; but both of them had a power of style which fixed forevermore the character of our Bible. They had a Homeric power of placing words in simple musical narrative, the effect of which is best expressed in

<sup>7</sup> See Hugh Pope, "A Brief History of the English Version of the New Testament first published at Rheims in 1582," *Library*, xx (1940). 351-376; xxi (1940). 44-77.

<sup>8</sup> Prefixed to *The English Hexapla, Exhibiting the Six Important English Translations of the New Testament Scriptures* (1841), p. 160.

<sup>9</sup> See David Daiches, *The King James Version of the English Bible* (Chicago, 1941).

Thomas Poyntz's account of the way Tyndale used to read what he had translated to his friends in Antwerp:

When the Sunday came, then went he to some merchant's chamber or other, whither came many other merchants, and unto them would he read some one parcel of scripture: the which proceeded so fruitfully, sweetly, and gently from him, much like to the writing of John the Evangelist, that it was a heavenly comfort and joy to the audience to hear him read the scriptures.

Pollard<sup>10</sup> has estimated that the King James version of the New Testament "alike in language, rhythm, and cadence," is fully ninety per cent Tyndale's. Coverdale's renderings of the Old Testament naturally required more change when better Hebrew scholars put them under scrutiny; but Coverdale, too, had the grand style, and his version of the Psalms, employed in the English prayer book, has held its place there unchanged because even the King James version cannot equal it in euphony.<sup>11</sup>

*The Book  
of Common  
Prayer*

The motive which led to the English prayer book was to a large degree the same as that which prompted the translation of the Bible: the desire to make the word of God more widely known. It had been the theory of the medieval Divine Service, or "hours of prayer," that worshipers attending all the devotions, as monks and nuns did, should chant through the entire book of psalms each week and have the entire Bible read once a year—in Latin, of course. This was the basic purpose about which the office had developed; but with the intrusion of new saints' days and many ornamental developments it had come about that comparatively little of the Bible remained in the service. The genius of the English prayer book was Thomas Cranmer (1487-1556), whom Henry VIII had made Archbishop of Canterbury and nature had endowed with the most beautiful prose style of his generation. When it became his duty, on the accession of Edward VI in 1547, to preside over the reconstruction of the liturgy, he returned to its original purpose and so arranged the calendar of services that the psalter should be completed every month, the Old Testament read through once, and the New Testament thrice, each year, the English text of the Great Bible being substituted for the Vulgate.

*Thomas  
Cranmer*

Cranmer was a man of compromise and natural timidity. His life included some rather mean episodes and had in it perhaps nothing very noble except his last gesture at the stake. He was surrounded by reformers of much more positive, heroic, and ungainly mold, men like Hooper and Latimer, who would have destroyed every tie between the new English service and the Middle Ages; but Cranmer was an accomplished liturgiologist, incapable of renouncing, capable even of reproducing in a new medium, the beauties which in the Roman breviary had encompassed the primitive devotion. He studied Cardinal Quignon's proposals for reforming the Latin service (1535,

<sup>10</sup> *The Beginning of the New Testament translated by William Tyndale, 1525*, with an introduction by A. W. Pollard (Oxford, 1926), p. xxi.

<sup>11</sup> See H. R. Willoughby, *The Coverdale Psalter and the Quatrocentenary of the Printed English Bible* (Chicago, 1935).

1537) and many Lutheran devotion books, and out of his great gifts for compromise and for style he constructed an order of service in English worthy to be the setting for the English Bible.<sup>12</sup> Hilaire Belloc, who loves neither Cranmer nor his church, has spoken nobly of him as a "jeweler in prose," who, when he has something special to do "constructs with a success only paralleled by the sonnets of Shakespeare":

There is not in all that he has thus left of perfect English one lengthy passage; most of the Collects, which with the isolated phrases of the Litany are his chief triumph, consist in a single sentence—but they are sentences which most men who know the trade would give their eyes to have written. And since that endures which is carved in hard material, they have endured, and given endurance to the fabric—novel and revolutionary in his time, the institution at the root of which he stands—The Church of England.<sup>13</sup>

The two Edwardian prayer books of 1549 and 1552 were put together in a time of violence and bitter religious strife. Over half the nation was infuriated, to the point of armed rebellion, by their substitution for the traditional Latin liturgy; of the rest there seem to have been few (among the leaders, at least) who did not vehemently assail them as a betrayal of Protestant principles. They were Cranmer's almost unaided work, and it is remarkable that work fitted to such a turbulent emergency could have such eternal grace. Note the passage in the communion service in the text of 1549. It is obviously a prayer for that particular year and for this new form of worship so hazardously and quarrelsomeously inaugurated:

Almighty and everliving God, which by thy holy apostle hast taught us to make prayers and supplications and to give thanks for all men, we humbly beseech thee most mercifully to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy divine majesty, beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal church with the spirit of truth, unity and concord: and grant that all they that do confess thy holy name may agree in the truth of thy holy word and live in unity and godly love. Specially we beseech thee to save and defend thy servant, Edward our king, that under him we may be godly and quietly governed. And grant unto his whole council, and to all that are put in authority under him, that they may truly and indifferently minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of God's true religion and virtue. Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops, pastors, and curates, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively word and rightly and duly administer thy holy sacraments.

Some of the topical references have now of necessity dropped out, and with them we lose our sense of the compelling occasion; but the remainder has the polish of old ivory and shows what no one at the time would have suspected, that the new English prose could be made to match the sonorous dignity of medieval Latin.

<sup>12</sup> See J. W. Legge, *Cranmer's Liturgical Projects* (1915); F. Procter and W. H. Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer* (1901). Cranmer's disputations and letters were edited by J. E. Cox in two volumes for the Parker Society (Cambridge, 1844, 1846).

<sup>13</sup> Hilaire Belloc, *Cranmer* (1931), p. 43.



*Hugh  
Latimer*

Hugh Latimer <sup>14</sup> (c. 1485-1555) was compared to Saul of Tarsus, whom he resembled in his course of life and particularly admired, for, as he says, "Paul was no sitting bishop, but a walking and a preaching bishop." The son of a humble Leicestershire yeoman, whose old-fashioned virtues shine in his son's reminiscences of him, Latimer was brought up at Cambridge in the most zealous orthodoxy, "as obstinate a Papist as any was in England"; but about 1524 he experienced a Pauline conversion at the hands of the Protestant martyr, Thomas Bilney (d. 1531), and thereafter preached the reformed doctrine with a vigor which several times brought him to trial for heresy. It is questionable whether he owed his escape at this period more to his fundamental likableness and shrewd sense or to the growing alienation of Henry VIII from the Pope. The outcome was that the King made him one of his chaplains, and in 1535 Bishop of Worcester. When the reaction came four years later, Latimer renounced his bishopric rather than sign the Catholic "six articles," was silenced as a preacher for almost eight years, and variously imprisoned. Edward VI's accession brought him on the stage again as the great preacher of the day and special director of the young King's conscience. He did not resume his episcopal dignity, but moved like a prophet between Archbishop Cranmer's palace at Lambeth, where he lived as an especial guest, and the royal palace of Whitehall. He was the strongest, simplest, and most honorable of all the English reformers, and crowned his career with the words he spoke at the stake, October 16, 1555:

Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man: we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as, I trust, shall never be put out.

About forty-five of Latimer's sermons have been in some form preserved. Twenty-seven were collected in an early Elizabethan volume (1562), and fourteen others had been printed in his lifetime; e.g., the fourth sermon "Of the Plough," delivered outside St. Paul's, January 18, 1549, and the seven preached before the King at Westminster in the following Lent. They appear to have been partly extemporal, and the texts depend to some extent upon notes taken by pious listeners; but these texts give us the real quality of Latimer's preaching. The style is very homely and lucid, suited alike to the downright earnestness of the preacher and to the mental capacity of the eleven year old King at Westminster or the outdoor London crowd in Paul's Churchyard. The short sentences are salty with anecdote and vivid figure; such as that of the woman who went to the sermons to sleep, or the country church which Bishop Latimer, arriving for an official visit, found locked up because the people were celebrating Robin Hood's Day, or the following great tribute to the devil:

<sup>14</sup> See R. W. and A. J. Carlyle, *Hugh Latimer* (Boston, 1899). Latimer's sermons are usefully reprinted in Everyman's Library, No. 40, with preface by Canon Beeching. The seven sermons before Edward VI and the sermon of the ploughers are in Arber's series of *English Reprints* (1869). See Elizabeth T. Hastings, "A Sixteenth-Century Manuscript Translation of Latimer's First Sermon before Edward," *PMLA*, LX (1945), pp. 959-1002.



And now I would ask a strange question. Who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England, that passeth all the rest in doing his office? I can tell, for I know him, who it is; I know him well. But now I think I see you listing and harkening that I should name him. There is one that passeth all the other, and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you. It is the Devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all other. He is never out of his diocese, he is never from his cure; ye shall never find him unoccupied, he is ever in his parish, he keepeth residence at all times. Ye shall never find him out of the way; call for him when you will, he is ever at home, the diligentest preacher in all the realm.<sup>15</sup>

He coins nicknames that stick; e.g., "strawberry preachers" for unpreaching prelates, because like strawberries they come but once a year and are luxuries, not meat. He is a particular master of the ironic question, as when he complains of clergymen in worldly office—"minters," he dubs them. They say they are too busy to preach.

They are otherwise occupied; some in the king's matters, some are ambassadors, some of the Privy Council, some to furnish the courts, some are lords of the Parliament, some are presidents, and some comptrollers of mints. Well, well! Is this their duty? Is this their office? Is this their calling? Should we have ministers of the church to be comptrollers of the mints? Is this a meet office for a priest that hath cure of souls? Is this his charge? I would here ask one question: I would fain know who controlleth the devil at home at his parish, while he controlleth the mint? If the apostles might not leave the office of preaching to be deacons, shall one leave it for minting?<sup>16</sup>

There is something of Jeremiah in him as he inveighs against the selfish vices of his time:

But London was never so ill as it is now. In times past men were full of pity and compassion; but now there is no pity, for in London their brother shall die in the streets for cold, he shall lie sick at their door between stock and stock . . . and perish there for hunger. . . . When I was a scholar in Cambridge myself, I heard very good report of London, and knew many that had relief of the rich men of London, but now I can hear no such good report, and yet I inquire of it and harken for it; but now charity is waxed cold: none helpeth the scholar nor yet the poor.

The sermons of this Lent, 1549, were preached to the sinister accompaniment of the Lord Admiral's catastrophe. He was being attainted and executed as Latimer spoke, and in the last of the series Latimer somberly draws the moral:

He was a covetous man, an horrible covetous man. I would there were no mo in England. He was an ambitious man. I would there were no mo in England. He was a seditious man, a contemner of common prayer. I would there were no mo in England. He is gone. I would he had left none behind him. Remember

<sup>15</sup> *The Ploughers*, Arber, p. 29.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

you, my lords, that you pray in your houses to the better mortification of your flesh.<sup>17</sup>

John Foxe

When Edward VI died, in 1553, and Mary came to the throne, many Protestant zealots avoided the fate of Cranmer and Latimer by fleeing to Lutheran Germany or Calvinist Switzerland, and there hardened their dissent.<sup>18</sup> One of the most turbulent groups gathered in Frankfort under the leadership of Cox, Foxe, and Knox. Richard Cox (1500-1581) later became Bishop of Ely and wrought much woe in that diocese, as he had formerly done in Oxford. John Knox<sup>19</sup> (1505-1572), a Scot, returned from Continental bickerings with Cox to make himself the Presbyterian autocrat of Edinburgh. The worldly career of John Foxe (1516-1587) was much less notable, but his influence on British Puritanism was perhaps the greatest of the three. He returned to England after Elizabeth's accession, but secured no office of prominence or emolument. One of the most paradoxical and admirable things we know of this arch-fabricator of Protestant propaganda is that he retained through life the affection and financial support of the poet Surrey's son, the Duke of Norfolk, whose tutor he had been. When Norfolk was beheaded for Popish treason (1572), Foxe loyally attended him to the scaffold, and the Duke remembered Foxe with an annuity in his will.

Foxe's  
"Book of  
Martyrs"

While still in Germany, Foxe undertook to implement the Protestant Reformation by an account of Christian martyrdoms. As published at Strassburg in 1554, the book is in Latin,<sup>20</sup> and brings the roll of martyrs only as far as Savonarola; but the events of the next few years in England provided Foxe with much more material and a far bitterer purpose. He started again in English and brought the work up to date in a folio of nearly two thousand double-columned pages, *The Acts and Monuments of the Church* (1563). The book was enormously successful, and was further enlarged in later editions, of which three more appeared before Foxe's death. It was familiarly called "The Book of Martyrs," and with its ghoulish pictures and dilated tales of persecution became favorite reading for a large public. In attenuated and modernized form it long continued to hold a darkly significant place in Sunday-school libraries and pious homes.

By classic standards Foxe is no great writer. As a historian he is sometimes contemptible; his psychology is childish, and the invariable bias of his views often diminishes his effects. But his work has the power that strong passion gives writing produced under the immediate shadow of direful events, and his command of documentary and reported detail is unapproached by anything else that has come down from the same period. His accounts of Tyndale and Latimer, for example, contain much which cannot be found elsewhere

<sup>17</sup> *Seventh Sermon Before the King's Majesty*, Arber, pp. 197f. A contemporary preacher of importance was Thomas Lever (1521-1577), three of whose sermons, preached in 1550, are edited by Arber, *English Reprints* (1870).

<sup>18</sup> See Christina H. Garrett, *The Marian Exiles* (Cambridge, 1938).

<sup>19</sup> See E. Muir, *John Knox: Portrait of a Calvinist* (1929); G. R. Preedy, *The Life of John Knox* (1940).

<sup>20</sup> *Commentarii Rerum in Ecclesia Gestarum . . . Liber Primus*. See J. F. Mozley, *John Foxe and his Book* (1940). The *Acts and Monuments* is edited by J. Stoughton (8v, 1877).

but bear unmistakable marks of truth. The "Book of Martyrs" did much to keep England Protestant, but it also had a primary and evil part in developing friction between Anglican and Puritan. It suspended the virtues of tolerance and humor, and encouraged the will to martyrdom in any cause that could be made to assume a religious bearing. It was this approved and honored book, much more than the Marprelate tracts, that the bishops would have suppressed if they had had a real understanding of their danger.

Another of the exiled brethren, Thomas Becon (1512-1567) became the great purveyor of popular Puritan piety. His "Works" in three folio volumes were issued by John Day in the years just preceding Shakespeare's birth. His best circulated piece, *The Sick Man's Salve*, was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1558-9 and had at least seventeen editions by 1632. It was bedside literature for vast numbers of good people, and is alluded to by the realistic dramatists.

Thomas  
Becon

By 1572 Puritan hostility to the episcopal system, the established prayer book, and ecclesiastical vestments had grown so bitter that an attempt was made through anonymous pamphlets to carry these questions over the heads of the Queen and bishops to the attention of the Parliament and the people at large. An *Admonition to the Parliament* was surreptitiously printed soon after Elizabeth's fourth Parliament assembled (May, 1572). The identity of the printer is still uncertain, but the authors were arrested and imprisoned for a time in Newgate. They were, of course, reforming ministers, John Field (father of the actor-dramatist, Nathan Field) and Thomas Wilcox. Their pamphlet is incisive and well written, dignified, but clearly seditious by the laws of the time. A *Second Admonition to the Parliament* soon followed, also anonymous, but ascribed to Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603), a man of very high repute among the Puritans for life and learning, who had recently lost his professorship of divinity at Cambridge.<sup>21</sup> Bishop Whitgift's two replies to the *Admonitions* (1572, 1574) are not effective, at any rate as literature; but the bishops had the law and the Queen on their side, and the opposition made no great headway till the Armada year of 1588 brought an explosion of the first magnitude.

The Puritan  
Controversy

The immediate literary occasion of the Marprelate tracts is trivial enough. Another dull episcopal book had appeared in the course of the Church's embarrassed efforts to keep the Puritan goslings beneath her wing: *A Defence of the Government Established in the Church of England for Ecclesiastical Matters* (1587). It was by John Bridges, the Dean of Salisbury, and was a reply to an anonymous apology for the dissenters (1584).<sup>22</sup> Two well-known Puritans at once replied to Bridges: Dudley Fenner in *A Defence of the Godly Ministers Against the Slanders of Dr. Bridges* (1587), and Hooker's

<sup>21</sup> For text and discussion of these works see W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas, *Puritan Manifestoes* (1907). For the ampler background consult A. S. Pearson, *Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism* (1925); M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism* (Chicago, 1939); and, for a still broader and very readable account, Wm. Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism... from Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton* (1938).

<sup>22</sup> *A Brief and Plain Declaration Concerning the Desires of All Those Faithful Ministers That Have and Do Seek for the Discipline and Reformation of the Church of England.*

Martin  
Marprelate

antagonist, Walter Travers, in *A Defence of the Ecclesiastical Discipline* (1588).<sup>23</sup> This was quite as usual, but it was strange that Martin Marprelate should in this year of national peril raise his ugly though amusing head. The immediate occasion was neither literary nor doctrinal. Robert Waldegrave, an experienced printer, was loose in the land with certain cases of contraband type and with anger in his heart. Waldegrave had incurred much punishment for issuing unauthorized Puritan polemics. In the uneasy month of April, 1588, his printing house was raided by order of the Star Chamber. The searchers confiscated his press and type, along with the book he was printing, a satirical dialogue against the state of the Church of England by John Udall, the nonconformist preacher at Kingston-on-Thames.<sup>24</sup> Waldegrave went into hiding near Kingston, put together a secret press, and printed another anti-episcopal book by Udall, as well as the *Exhortation unto the Governors and People of Wales* by the redoubtable John Penry, who was Udall's friend and former college companion. Here Waldegrave also printed the first of the pamphlets (*Oh Read over Dr. John Bridges, for It Is a Worthy Work*) claiming the authorship of the "reverend and worthy Martin Marprelate gentleman."

The  
Marprelate  
Press

The press was then removed from the dangerous proximity of London to Fawsley House, Northamptonshire, where the second pamphlet, continuing the attack on Bridges, was printed; thence to Coventry, where two more were produced. By this time Waldegrave was exhausted by the perilous and exacting labor, and he made his escape, first, it is said, to La Rochelle, later to Edinburgh, where he was licensed by King James and prospered. A substitute printer was found, the itinerant press moved on, and three more pamphlets came from it before a roadside mishap led to the capture of press and printers near Manchester, August 14, 1589. The last piece of all, *The Protestation of Martin Marprelate*, was, with almost incredible gallantry, printed by accomplices in the plot on a substitute press, after this arrest and while the toils were closing upon them. The enraged prosecutions which followed the capture of Marprelate's agents have given us more detailed information about this secret press than we possess about any comparable episode in Queen Elizabeth's reign.<sup>25</sup> We know with surprising exactness the facts about its manipulation and about the day by day lives of many of the men and women concerned with it during the twelve months of its operation; but the authorities never discovered, and we do not know today, who wrote the pamphlets. They hanged John Penry four years later on another charge; they tried and acquitted Job Throckmorton. Both of these

<sup>23</sup> This is anonymous and has been ascribed also to Penry.

<sup>24</sup> This short dialogue by Udall (c. 1560-1592) has a long title: *The State of the Church of England, Laid Open in a Conference between Diotrephes a Bishop, Tertullus a Papist, Demetrius an Usurer, Pandochus an Innkeeper, and Paul a Preacher of the Word of God*. Both it and Udall's slightly later tract referred to above, *A Demonstration of the Truth, etc.*, are reprinted by E. Arber (*English Scholar's Library*, Nos. 5, 9, 1879, 1880). They are venomously bitter against the bishops, but have no touch of Marprelate's amusing buffoonery.

<sup>25</sup> See W. Pierce, *An Historical Introduction to the Marprelate Tracts* (1908) and, for the texts, *The Marprelate Tracts, 1588, 1589* (1911). Pierce's treatment is biased, but very full.

were in the plot to the ears, but whether either was Marprelate we know no more than we know who Junius was two centuries later.<sup>26</sup>

Marprelate anticipates Junius in a number of things. He has the same assurance that he cannot be discovered:

Whosoever Martin is, neither thou, nor any man or woman in England shall know while you live, suspect and trouble as many as you will; and therefore save your money in seeking for him, for it may be he is nearer you than you are ware of. . . . I am alone. No man under heaven is privy, or hath been privy, unto my writings against you. I use the advice of none therein.<sup>27</sup>

Like Junius, he attempts to overawe his victims by the extensiveness of his private knowledge, and threatens further exposure if they pursue him. He pretends also to be the leader of an insuppressible movement:

For the day that you hang Martin, assure yourselves, there will twenty Martins spring in my place.

He had, indeed, most devoted and self-sacrificing associates, but he had no great backing in the Puritan party, for he offended unpardonably against the grave dignity that was the hall mark of their profession. Men like Cartwright were as outraged as Richard Hooker was by the style of dialectic which addressed a learned antagonist as "you sodden-headed ass, you." Moreover, when the first pamphlet was being prepared, Drake was still defending the Channel against the Armada, laden with the common enemies of Puritan and Prelatist. The bishops whom Martin attacks and lampoons were not only Elizabeth's chief agents in maintaining the national morale; the leading ones were members of the privy council. The pamphlets were most foolishly and wickedly ill-timed.

Their racy style has saved them. They evoked a series of replies and imitations, which, however, it would be absurd to consider under the classification of religious prose.<sup>28</sup> Shakespeare, one would think, must have read Marprelate. Their idioms are sometimes strangely alike; as in these passages:

*Martin's  
Style*

Bishops are cogging and cozening knaves. This priest [i.e., the Bishop of London] went to buffets with his son-in-law for a bloody nose. Well fare, all good tokens.<sup>29</sup>

Then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black-Monday last, at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year in the afternoon. (*Merchant of Venice*, II. v. 24f.)

<sup>26</sup> J. Dover Wilson argues for Sir Roger Williams: "Martin Marprelate and Shakespeare's Fluellen: A New Theory of the Authorship of the Marprelate Tracts," *Library*, 3rd ser. III (1912). 113-151, 241-276, 345-374; IV (1913). 92-104. D. J. McGinn emphatically reasserts Penry's authorship in "The Real Martin Marprelate," *PMLA*, LVIII (1943). 84-107.

<sup>27</sup> *Hay Any Work for Cooper?*, ed. Pierce, pp. 220, 246.

<sup>28</sup> See below, Part II, ch. v.

<sup>29</sup> *The Epistle*, Pierce, 77f.

Or compare with the "gracious fooling" in *Twelfth Night* (II. iii) about Picrogramitus and the Vapians passing the equinoctial of Queubus the close of Martin's *Epistle*:

Given at my castle between two whales, neither four days from Penniless Bench, nor yet at the west end of Shrovetide, but the fourteenth year at the least of the age of Charing Cross, within a year of Midsummer between twelve and twelve of the clock.

Richard  
Hooker

God must have seemed very good to Archbishop Whitgift—Caiaphas of Canterbury, as Marprelate called him—when the learned young Master of the Temple begged to be relieved of city duty and assigned to a country parish in order to complete a work on the laws of Anglican church government. Richard Hooker<sup>30</sup> (c. 1554-1600) had lately borne off all the honors in a controversy with Walter Travers over subtleties of predestination and justification, and in his personal life he was the very flower and type of that apostolic virtue which the episcopal system was accused of crushing. Accordingly, Hooker was presented to the rectory of Boscombe near Salisbury in 1591, and in 1595 transferred on the Queen's own recommendation to Bishopsbourne in Kent "without any addition," says Walton, "of dignity or profit." The first four books *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* were printed in 1593 and the long fifth book in 1597. When Hooker died, the year after Spenser and at the same early age, *his* great work had been completed in eight books; but there is reason to believe that the manuscript of Book vi was tampered with after his death.

Hooker's long preface is frankly addressed to the Puritans, to whom he admits with a quiet irony,

The wonderful zeal and fervor wherewith ye have withstood the received orders of this church was the first thing which caused me to enter into consideration whether (as all your published books and writings peremptorily maintain) every Christian man fearing God stand bound to join with you for the furtherance of that which ye term *the Lord's discipline*. Wherein I must plainly confess unto you that, before I examined your sundry declarations in that behalf, it could not settle in my head to think but that undoubtedly such numbers of otherwise right well affected and most religiously inclined minds had some marvellous reasonable inducements, which led them with so great earnestness that way.

The first book is also introductory, a fundamental assertion of law and order as the *sine qua non* of all worlds and societies. Shakespeare, by intention or otherwise, has summarized its teaching:

<sup>30</sup> The best edition of Hooker is still the one edited by the eminent John Keble (6ed., 3v, Oxford, 1874). The best life is still that of Izaak Walton, first printed in 1665. There is a separate edition of *Eccl. Polity*, Book VIII, by R. A. Houk (1931) and the entire text is available in two volumes of Everyman's Library. See D. C. Boughner, "Notes on Hooker's Prose," *RES*, xv (1939). 1-7. Valuable new information is supplied by C. J. Sisson, *The Judicious Marriage of Mr. Hooker and the Birth of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (Cambridge, 1940); and Hardin Craig, "Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity—First Form," *JHL*, v (1944). 91-104.

The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre  
 Observe degree, priority, and place,  
 Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,  
 Office, and custom, in all line of order.

Take but degree away, untune that string,  
 And, hark! what discord follows! <sup>31</sup>

Against this grave and cosmic background Hooker proceeds in the following books to bring to trial each of the dissenters' complaints. He is one of the subtlest of dialecticians and one of the best humored of debaters, and these advantages so win upon our sympathy that he perhaps triumphs more than he should and makes us feel (though Hooker never says so) that the self-righteousness of men like Cartwright is little better than what he calls "the scurrilous and more than satirical immodesty of Martinism." A giber might say that the Church of England had once more been saved by a good prose style. But the *Ecclesiastical Polity* really triumphs because it is great and sane and quintessentially attuned to the English mind.<sup>32</sup> So long and controversial a work could hardly have held its place without a great style. Hooker's has not the brilliance of some of the prose of the next century. It has no great number of long words, nor any very high proportion of long sentences. It has no particular mannerisms, beyond a habit of opening sentences with an inversion: "Choice there is not," "Impossible it was." For the most part Hooker is content to make his difficult argument simple, lucid, and gracious; but just often enough he will draw out the stops, and in a breath-taking sentence show the full power that his pen possessed. These sentences would be too long to quote, but one should read aloud the ones that begin: "Now if nature should intermit her course" (I. iii. 2), "And because the greatest part of men" (I. x. 6), "Concerning Faith" (I. xi. 6), "But that we may at length conclude" (I. xv. 4). These are all from the first book; I will quote one sentence from Book v, in which he summarizes his defense of the authorized prayer book (v. xxv. 5):

To him which considereth the grievous and scandalous inconveniences whereunto they make themselves daily subject, with whom any blind and secret corner is judged a fit house of common prayer; the manifold confusions which they fall into where every man's private spirit and gift (as they term it) is the only bishop that ordaineth him to this ministry; the irksome deformities whereby through endless and senseless effusions of indigested prayers they oftentimes disgrace in most unsufferable manner the worthiest part of Christian duty towards God, who herein are subject to no certain order, but pray both what and how they list: to him, I say, which weigheth duly all these things the reasons cannot be obscure, why God doth in public prayer so much respect the solemnity of places where, the authority and calling of persons by whom, and

<sup>31</sup> *Troilus and Cressida* I. iii. 77-137.

<sup>32</sup> See E. N. S. Thompson, "Richard Hooker among the Controversialists," *PQ*, xx (1941), 454-464.



the precise appointment even with what words or sentences his name should be called on amongst his people.

The *Ecclesiastical Polity* is the closest thing in English prose to the *Faerie Queene* of Spenser. Coeval in date and parallel in its national spirit and mediating purpose, it has something of the same sage and serious melliflence.



PART II

The Reign of Elizabeth  
(1558-1603)



# I

## The Elizabethan Lyric

The Elizabethan poets <sup>1</sup> to a very great extent learned their art, and in turn *The Anthologies* communicated it to their readers, by means of the song collections which issued in a constant stream from "Tottel's Miscellany" in 1557 to Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody* in 1602.<sup>2</sup> So much in demand were they that one or another of them was being published or reprinted in almost every year of this long period. Most of them now touch the fancy chiefly by their charming titles: *A Handful of Pleasant Delights*, *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, *The Phoenix Nest*, etc., but in their time they were read so avidly that perfect copies rank among the very rarest of sixteenth-century books, and we shall never know how many have altogether perished.

Two different strains of poetry furnished the material: on the one hand, the courtly verse which many gentlemen of rank wrote but did not publicly acknowledge; and on the other, the broadside ballad rime which aimed at a somewhat lower and larger class of society.<sup>3</sup> To the first type belongs the earliest and most famous of these volumes, *The Book of Songs and Sonnets—Miscellany*—known in modern times, from its publisher's name, as "Tottel's Miscellany,"—which gave the world the songs of Surrey and Wyatt, previously unprinted,

<sup>1</sup> The following works will be found useful in connection with matters and authors discussed in Part II (and often in Part III also): E. P. Cheyney, *A History of England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth* (2v, 1914-26); *Shakespeare's England*, ed. Sir Sidney Lee and C. T. Onions (2v, Oxford, 1916); Hubert S. Hall, *Society in the Elizabethan Age* (1901); Phoebe Sheavyn, *The Literary Profession in the Elizabethan Age* (Manchester, 1909); M. St. C. Byrne, *Elizabethan Life in Town and Country* (1926); G. B. Harrison, *England in Shakespeare's Day* (1928), and *Elizabethan Journals, 1591-1603* (3v, 1928-33; rev. ed. in one volume, 1939), and *A Jacobean Journal, 1603-1606* (1941); Hardin Craig, *The Enchanted Glass, the Elizabethan Mind in Literature* (1936). Literary histories for the period include George Saintsbury, *A History of Elizabethan Literature* (1887 and many subsequent editions); Thomas Seccombe and J. W. Allen, *The Age of Shakespeare, 1579-1631* (2v, 1903, 6ed., 1914); F. E. Schelling, *English Literature during the Lifetime of Shakespeare* (1910, rev. ed., 1927); E. C. Dunn, *The Literature of Shakespeare's England* (1936).

<sup>2</sup> Admirable editions by H. E. Rollins of most of the books here discussed have been published by the Harvard Univ. Press; viz., *Tottel's Miscellany* (2v, 1928-29); *A Handful of Pleasant Delights* (1924); *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1926); *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1927); *The Phoenix Nest* (1931); *England's Helicon* (2v, 1935); *A Poetical Rhapsody* (2v, 1931-32). John Erskine's little book, *The Elizabethan Lyric* (1903), is still a good general guide. Valuable anthologies include F. E. Schelling, *A Book of Elizabethan Lyrics* (1895); J. W. Hebel and H. H. Hudson, *Poetry of the English Renaissance, 1509-1660* (1929); E. K. Chambers, *The Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse* (Oxford, 1932); M. W. Black, *Elizabethan and Seventeenth-Century Lyrics* (Philadelphia, 1938); Roy Lamson and Hallett Smith, *The Golden Hind, an Anthology of Elizabethan Prose and Poetry* (1942).

<sup>3</sup> The two types were less distinct, however, than later; see C. R. Baskervill, *MP*, xxiii (1925), 120. For Skelton's ballad of the Scottish king see above, ch. IV, n.14; and see also J. W. Draper, "An Epitaph upon the Death of King Edward," *JEGP*, xxix (1930), 370.

and added many poems by Nicholas Grimald, Lord Vaux, and other authors.<sup>4</sup> The ballad poetry is represented in Clement Robinson's collection, *A Handful of Pleasant Delights*, known to us from an edition of 1584, though its first issue probably was in 1566. Here one finds the famous song of "Greensleeves," the ballad of George Mannington (hanged at Cambridge in 1576), and much earlier material. The metres are varied and singable, and in most cases are fitted to a stated air.<sup>5</sup>

The Para-  
dise of  
Dainty  
Devices

The *Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* is dour in tone and rather monotonous. Only one edition of it (1584) is known to have been printed. Yet *The Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576), which likewise favors melancholy themes, attained at least ten editions. This influential book was built around the poems that Richard Edwards, master of the Queen's Chapel, had left when he died ten years before. Edwards' May song, his "*amantium irae*," and his song about music which is quoted in *Romeo and Juliet*,<sup>6</sup> are notable; but many other authors, some thirty in fact, are drawn upon. The selections from Francis Kinwelmarsh and Lord Vaux (one of Tottel's poets also) are among the best. This volume, next to the *Songs and Sonnets*, seems to have had most effect in shaping Shakespeare's first notions of lyric. These early song books are far from being the gay affairs that their titles might suggest. They are marked by a high moral seriousness and a distrust of life; love songs are relatively few and of great sobriety. Poulter's measure and heptameter rime have too much predominance among the metres and give a churchlike air to the compositions written in them. The ballad type of poem too largely takes the form of lament for great men recently deceased. The later years of Henry VIII, reflected in the poems of Wyatt and Surrey, were no very bright period, but in the collections which followed Tottel during the first two decades of Elizabeth's reign one has the measure of a time even less light-hearted and much more bourgeois.

The  
Phoenix  
Nest

By the year of Marlowe's death the level of lyric poetry had risen, and in this year (1593) *The Phoenix Nest* was compiled by one "R. S." (perhaps Richard Stapleton) of the Inner Temple, and "built up," as the title-page asserts, "with the most rare and refined works of noblemen, worthy knights, gallant gentlemen, masters of arts, and brave scholars." The social distinction of the book is evident, and for once this is combined with poetical excellence, for *The Phoenix Nest* is one of the most charming productions of its kind. Nearly all the identifiable authors are Oxford men, and the publication may perhaps be connected with Queen Elizabeth's visit to that university the year before. The first thing in the collection is a prose piece vindicating the memory of the Earl of Leicester, late chancellor of Oxford, and this is followed by three elegies on his nephew Sidney (by Matthew Roydon, Raleigh,

<sup>4</sup> Almost simultaneously with Tottel's book appeared another collection, *The Court of Venus* (1557-58), of which no complete copy is known.

<sup>5</sup> For further ballad texts of the time see H. E. Rollins, *Old English Ballads, 1553-1625* (Cambridge, 1920).

<sup>6</sup> *Romeo and Juliet*, IV. v. 129-147.

and Dyer,<sup>7</sup> respectively), which were reprinted in 1595 with Spenser's *Astrophel* and are often taken by careless persons to be Spenser's work. Peele, Nicholas Breton, Thomas Lodge, Dr. Eedes of Christ Church, and Thomas Watson, lately revealed as Marlowe's intimate in London, all contributed. The only dissonant note in this group of Oxford poets is the single poem by the Earl of Oxford himself, who was a Cambridge graduate and had been the notorious foe of Sidney. The most valuable pieces in the volume are the lyrics of Raleigh, Lodge, Dyer, and Watson; the longest single poem is *A Dream*, "learnedly set down by a worthy gentleman, a brave scholar, and master of arts in both universities," which is perhaps the work of Dr. William Gager of Christ Church. It consists of sixty rime royal stanzas, and though it attempts a timid approach to Italian eroticism, is much closer to the tone of Sackville's *Induction* and Sir David Lindsay's *Dream*.

There was at Oxford at this time a special cult of Sidney's memory, not unassociated with pursuit of the patronage of his living sister, the Countess of Pembroke; and these things may have something to do with the compilation as well as the title of *The Phoenix Nest*. In the previous year Nicholas Breton, who contributed half a dozen poems to the book, had published at Oxford two long allegories which he inscribed to the Countess, with a secondary dedication to the "gentlemen students and scholars of Oxford": *The Pilgrimage to Paradise, Joined with the Countess of Pembroke's Love*.<sup>8</sup> Together these poems amount to about 2500 lines in the six-line stanza that Breton and his contemporaries particularly affected. They are abstrusely moral and do not belong in a discussion of the lyric anthologies except as their recondite references to the phoenix' nest may be taken as explaining the symbolism of R. S.'s title. In the *Pilgrimage*, Breton says,

Nor was the labor little for to climb  
The fiery ashes of a phoenix nest;

and in the *Love*,

O let my soul beseech her sacred rest  
But in the ashes of the phoenix nest.

The phoenix is the symbol of Christ, but also, it would appear, of Sidney, whose merits are reincarnated in his sister.

More germane to the present story are the two anthologies issued by Richard Jones under Breton's popular name: *Britton's Bower of Delights* (1591, 1597) and *The Arbor of Amorous Devices . . . by N. B. gent.* (1597).<sup>9</sup> Breton was certainly not the sole author of either volume. He distinctly disclaimed responsibility for the first, except the long opening poem on Sidney's death entitled *Amoris Lachrimae* and "one or two other toys,"

<sup>7</sup> On the authorship of this piece, which has been attributed to Fulke Greville also, see R. M. Sargent, *At the Court of Queen Elizabeth* (1935), pp. 211-213.

<sup>8</sup> Reprinted in Vol. 1 of Breton's *Works*, ed. A. B. Grosart (1879).

<sup>9</sup> Both are reproduced in facsimile in *Huntington Library Pub.* with introductions by H. E. Rollins (1933, 1936). There was evidently an edition of the *Arbor* in 1594, but no copy is known to survive.

Nicholas  
Breton

which, however, is an understatement of his contribution. Ten poems are found in both the collections. There is much charming verse in these little books; they include several delightful lyrics, such as the song Richard Edwards had written for Emily to sing in his lost play of *Palamon and Arcite*, the ditty Bottom had in mind when he sang of

The ousel-cock so black of hue,  
With orange-tawny bill,<sup>10</sup>

and a ballad with the enchanting refrain,

Give me leave to love thee, lass,  
Give me leave to love thee;  
Thou seest that I can do no less,  
Then give me leave to love thee,

There are a number of poems on Sidney, one of which contains the fine lines,

Here lies the flower of chivalry that ever England bred,

and

He was a Phoenix of a man; I fear there are no mo,

and some quaint acrostical tributes to well-known ladies of Elizabeth's court.

A greater name than Breton's was invoked in 1599 by William Jaggard to advertise the collection that he called *The Passionate Pilgrim*, by *W. Shakespeare*.<sup>11</sup> Jaggard's purpose was probably to persuade the purchasers of the book that they were obtaining the Shakespearean rarity which Meres had mentioned in 1598 as "his sugared sonnets among his private friends." He does begin with two genuine sonnets from the "dark lady" sequence, which he had somehow secured in manuscript, adds three other Shakespeare items from the recently printed text of *Love's Labor's Lost*, and completes the little volume with pleasant lyrics by Richard Barnfield, Marlowe, Bartholomew Griffin, and other writers. A similar Shakespearean interest attaches to Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr* (1601). This is in itself not an anthology, but a curious mélange of stanzaic poems by Chester, partly Arthurian in subject, partly botanical, partly complimentary to his patron, Sir John Salusbury.<sup>12</sup> Appended to it, however, is a group of "poetical essays" on the theme of the turtle (i.e. dove) and phoenix, consisting of remarkable signed poems by "Ignoto," Shakespeare, Marston, Chapman, and Ben Jonson.

The most valuable of all the poetical anthologies is *England's Helicon* (1600), compiled apparently by the printer Nicholas Ling, whose reversed initials (L. N.) sign the preface, and dedicated to John Bodenham, who was the patron of the commonplace books *Politeuphuia*<sup>13</sup> (1597), *Wit's Theatre*

*Chester,  
Love's  
Martyr*

<sup>10</sup> *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. i. 131 f.

<sup>11</sup> See edition by J. Q. Adams (*Folger Shakespeare Library Pub.*, 1939).

<sup>12</sup> Edited by A. B. Grosart (1878). See also Carleton Brown, *Poems by Sir John Salusbury and Robert Chester* (Bryn Mawr, 1913); and H. E. Rollins, *New Variorum Shakespeare, The Poems* (1938), pp. 559-583.

<sup>13</sup> This is derived from Sir Thomas Elyot's *Banquet of Sapience* and William Baldwin's *Treatise of Moral Philosophy*. See above, Part I, ch. II.

(1599), *Belvedere*<sup>14</sup> (1600), and less directly of Meres' *Palladis Tamia*, or *England's Wit's Treasury* (1598). The *Helicon* contains about a hundred and fifty poems and includes many of the finest lyrics that had appeared from Tottel's Miscellany to Shakespeare. One of Ling's meritorious innovations was to add the authors' names more frequently and more accurately than had previously been the practice; another was to recognize, to the extent of fourteen examples, the lyrics in the song books of Byrd, Dowland, Morley, and Nicholas Yonge. A desire, rather curious in 1600, to specialize in pastoral themes has led to the chief defects of the work: over-representation of the chilly, translated pastorals in Bartholomew Yong's *Montemayor* (1598), and, what is worse, tampering with the texts of other songs to give them a falsely pastoral color.

Equally well known, though of far less poetic value, is the large compilation which Robert Allot published later in 1600 under the imitative title, *England's Parnassus, or the Choicest Flowers of Our Modern Poets*.<sup>15</sup> Well over two thousand passages of verse are here gathered together under subject headings such as "angels," "temperance," "sorrow," etc. Since the book contains 510 pages and attempts to name the author of each excerpt, and since it covers plays as well as nondramatic poetry, it is a familiar aid to bibliographers. It gives us a poem of Marlowe not otherwise known; but its selections are neither made with taste nor classified with care. The lover of poetry cannot read it and the scholar cannot rely upon it, but neither can safely disregard it.

The last of the Elizabethan lyric anthologies, Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody* (1602), has fewer great names associated with it than *England's Helicon*, but in the average quality of its contents is only slightly inferior. It was deservedly popular, and in three new editions (1608, 1611, 1621) maintained the vogue of this essentially Elizabethan type of book till the end of James I's reign. It differs from all the earlier collections in the way its contents are made up. The bulk of the volume consists in the work of three carefully distinguished writers, comprising (1) 40 poems of various types, "sonnets, odes, elegies, and madrigals," composed by the editor, Francis Davison (c. 1575-c. 1619), son of Queen Elizabeth's ill-treated secretary; (2) 18 similar poems by his young brother, Walter (1581-c. 1608); (3) 65 poems, "sonnets, odes, elegies, and other poesies," by "Anomos," whom the editor describes as his dear friend, and of whose contributions he says, "those under the name of Anomos were written...almost twenty years since, when poetry was far from that perfection to which it hath now attained." There are about fifty other poems, arranged either in an introductory group or in a final section of "divers poems of sundry authors,"—both, as Davison says, added by the printer. These additions include, besides further work of the three main contributors, some lovely lyrics by Sidney, Raleigh, Camp-

<sup>14</sup> *Belvedere* professes to be a collection of very short poetical passages; but see C. Crawford's discussion of it, *England's Parnassus* (Oxford, 1913), p. xiv f.

<sup>15</sup> This has been admirably edited, as indicated in the note above. See also F. B. Williams, Jr., "Notes on *England's Parnassus*," *MLN*, LII (1937). 402-405.

ion, Constable, and others. Further poems were added in the later editions, but it is not likely that Davison had much to do with their selection or that they can tell us much about the origin of the book.

The Davisons are pleasant love poets. Walter, the minor brother, who was but eighteen when he wrote, is much given to sonnets of the *Astrophel and Stella* type, though this style was rather *passé* at the time. Francis, too, has nine such sonnets, but gives particular attention to the short madrigal built for musical setting. These poets have the freshness of youth, and something of youth's bad judgment, as when Francis attempts to put down Spenser and set up Samuel Daniel as "prince of English poets," or in his truly unhappy "inscription for the statue of Dido," which Shakespeare must have been smiling at in the "widow Dido" passage of the *Tempest*,<sup>16</sup>

O most unhappy Dido,  
Unhappy wife and more unhappy Widow!

The great problem of the book is "Anomos." In certain manuscript lists in Francis Davison's handwriting the poems assigned to him in 1602 are credited to an "A. W.", whose initials appear only once in the 1602 edition of the *Rhapsody*. It is unlikely that A. W. stands for "anonymous writers," or that Anomos (as the printer of the 1608 reprint seems to have thought) was an illiteracy for "anonymous." Anomos, which in Greek may mean "unmusical" or "lawless," is most prudently to be regarded as just what Davison says it is, the pseudonym of a single poet, writing some twenty years before the publication of the volume. He was an interesting poet, devoted to Sidney and strongly under the influence of the young Spenser. Like Sidney, Spenser, and Harvey in the years around 1580, he was attracted by the movement to write English poems in classical metres, such as phalaeuciaks, hexameters, and sapphics. He had outgrown poulter's measure, but was still very much in the grasp of the *Venus and Adonis* metre, which he used for twenty-five poems, and the Davison brothers for only three. By reducing this stanza to four-foot lines he gets a more lyric movement which serves him well in eight other songs. He was not much of a sonneteer, offering only four specimens where the Davisons have twenty-three; but he had a very fresh and happy vein in the lighter lyrics which he calls odes, and he has one song, "in praise of a beggar's life," which Izaak Walton rightly chose for a special immortality:

Bright shines the sun: play, beggars, play!  
Here's scraps enough to serve today.

### *The Song Books*

In the preceding pages an effort has been made to avoid the phrase "song book," descriptive though it is of some of the poetical anthologies, in order to reserve the term for books which give us both songs and their music.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Tempest*, II. i. 80 ff.

<sup>17</sup> An excellent brief survey of Elizabethan music by W. Barclay Squire will be found in *Shakespeare's England* (Oxford, 1916), II. 15-49. The great modern authority is E. H. Fellowes, who, besides editing for musicians' use a great many of the song books, has published the following books of more general appeal: *The English Madrigal* (1925); a succinct summary;



Much of the finest Elizabethan lyric, and some of the highest achievements of the Elizabethan mind, are found in the collections that the musicians made for household singing, for the English musicians in this period were, like the poets, the greatest in Europe. The songs now to be very briefly considered are of two kinds: those arranged for polyphonal singing by three to six persons without instrumental accompaniment; and songs, usually solos, accompanied by the lute or other instrument.

A book of the first kind was issued by Wynkyn de Worde in 1530, and another, *Songs of Three, Four, and Five Voices*, by Thomas Whythorne from John Day's press in 1571; but the first great master of this style was William Byrd (1543-1623), the Atlas of English music.<sup>18</sup> Besides composing very great settings for the services of both the Roman and the English church, Byrd published, "for the recreation of all such as delight in music," three volumes (1588, 1589, 1611) of songs grave and gay for private singing, using sometimes psalms and sometimes lyrics from such poets as Sidney, Dyer, Oxford, or other contemporaries. Hardly less preëminent in this field are Byrd's brilliant pupil, Thomas Morley (1558-1603), Thomas Weelkes (c. 1575-1623) and John Wilbye (1574-1638). Between them they had by 1609 published a dozen books, each consisting of some twenty or more lyrics set for group singing, and other musicians added vastly to the number. Morley, who at one time was Shakespeare's neighbor in the parish of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, set his song, "It was a lover and his lass" for the lute,<sup>19</sup> and he wrote also in dialogue form a most attractive textbook of his art, *A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music* (1597).<sup>20</sup>

William  
Byrd

Thomas  
Morley

After the appearance of Nicholas Yonge's *Musica Transalpina* in 1588 these unaccompanied vocal pieces came to be known commonly by the Italian name of madrigals. By their settings the musicians enhanced the loveliness and greatly increased the popularity of the contemporary lyrics, and their books also preserve the texts of many charming songs which have not otherwise survived. One of the showpieces of the type is the collection edited by Morley in 1601, *The Triumphs of Oriana, to Five and Six Voices*. Here twenty-five lyrics in praise of Queen Elizabeth are set to music by nearly the same number of different composers, among whom appears John Milton, the poet's father.<sup>21</sup> Each poem ends with an acclamation of the old Queen:

Madrigals

Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana:  
Long live fair Oriana!

*The English Madrigal Composers* (Oxford, 1921), a fuller treatment; and *English Madrigal Verse, 1588-1632* (Oxford, 1920), full texts of the lyrics without the music. See also M. C. Boyd, *Elizabethan Music and Musical Criticism* (Philadelphia, 1940).

<sup>18</sup> See E. H. Fellowes, *William Byrd* (Oxford, 1936).

<sup>19</sup> In his *First Book of Aires... to Sing and Play to the Lute* (1600). It is remarkable that the composers of purely vocal music seem to have used none of Shakespeare's songs. See E. Brennecke, Jr., "Shakespeare's Musical Collaboration with Morley," *PMLA*, LIV (1939), 139-149, and discussion, *ibid.*, pp. 149-152.

<sup>20</sup> Facsimile edition, Shakespeare Association (1937). The form of this book is doubtless imitated from Ascham's *Toxophilus*.

<sup>21</sup> See E. Brennecke, Jr., *John Milton the Elder and His Music* (1938), pp. 44-60.

It is very fine, but the Queen's praise had been quite as beautifully rendered in one of Morley's earlier songs (1593), which begins,

Blow, shepherds, blow your pipes with gladsome glee resounding,  
See where the fair Eliza comes with love and grace abounding;

and another of Morley's gems, in his collection of 1594, preserves with wonderful fidelity the spirit of Elizabethan merriment:

Ho! who comes here along with bagpiping and drumming?  
O 'tis the morris dance I see, the morris dance a-coming, . . .

John  
Dowland

Books of songs for lute accompaniment were quite as numerous, and these give the original texts with less truncation or change than they sometimes suffered when adapted to voices alone. John Dowland's four books of songs and airs for the lute (1597, 1600, 1603, 1612) and Robert Jones's five of about the same dates are admirable lyric anthologies, consisting mainly of songs of unknown authorship. In one of the *Passionate Pilgrim* poems of 1599, "If music and sweet poetry agree," Richard Barnfield parallels Dowland with Spenser:

Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch  
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;  
Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such  
As, passing all conceit, needs no defence.<sup>22</sup>

Thomas  
Campion

The most important of the lutenist collections in a literary sense, however, are the five books in which the lyrics of Thomas Campion<sup>23</sup> (1567-1620) were published. Campion was a man of varied abilities: a Cambridge scholar trained in the law, also a doctor of medicine, the author of a large body of excellent Latin verse<sup>24</sup> and of four masques, and a controversialist in prose. Above all he was an understanding lover of Horace and of Catullus, and his genius reached its height in the great body of songs, of which he customarily composed both the words and the music. They are in the best sense pagan and the best of them are remarkable for their freshness and variety. Shakespeare's age produced little that is better than such works of Campion as "I care not for these ladies," "Shall I come, sweet love, to thee?" "Never love unless you can Bear with all the faults of man," and "There is a garden in her face."

Early  
Elizabethan  
Lyrists

To return from the songs of Campion to those of the opening of Queen Elizabeth's reign is to convince oneself of the progress that lyric art made in forty years. The poets whose works were collectively published in the two pre-Spenser decades, 1558-1578, do not stand in distinction or power much above the casual contributors to the early anthologies. They had, indeed, learned their art from Tottel's Miscellany and were not very am-

<sup>22</sup> This poem had been published by Barnfield in 1598.

<sup>23</sup> See Campion's *Works*, ed. P. Vivian (Oxford, 1909); also A. H. Bullen, *Elizabethans* (1924), pp. 125-152; M. M. Kastendieck, *England's Musical Poet, Thomas Campion* (1938); R. W. Short, "The Metrical Theory and Practice of Thomas Campion," *PMLA*, LIX (1944), 1003-1018.

<sup>24</sup> See L. Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae* (1940), pp. 52-54.

bitious to improve it. Self-consciousness and timidity hang over them; the display of aesthetic emotion in print was regarded as a vulgar act, and if we believe these poets' prefaces, there can hardly have been a time when the artist so trembled before the critic. They hasten to confess that they lack the skill of Chaucer or Surrey or Sackville, and in servile terms beg the protection of some great lord or lady against the Momuses and Zoili ambushed for their destruction. They deprecate novelty and seek respectability for their efforts either by basing them upon accepted classics or by chanting them to hymnlike airs.

Such was Lord Burghley's kinsman, Barnabe Googe (1540-1594), who after study at both the English universities broadened himself by life in France and Spain, returned to shine for some years as a love poet and translator of anti-papal satire, and then passed into the Irish civil service, where he must have known, and probably influenced, Spenser.<sup>25</sup> Googe's *Eglogs, Epitaphs, and Sonnets*<sup>26</sup> were published in 1563, ostensibly by a blundering friend and an over-hasty printer, who, however, did not fail to allow the poet opportunity to add a dedicatory letter explaining "how loath I have been, being of long time earnestly required, to suffer these trifles of mine to come to light." Googe has little lyric power and little variety of form. Whatever he has to say he is usually content to say in the heptameter couplet. He uses it in his version of Palingenius' long *Zodiac of Life* (1560-1565) and in his historically interesting translation of Thomas Kirchmayer's *Regnum Papisticum*, which he entitled *The Popish Kingdom, or Reign of Antichrist* (1570).<sup>27</sup> The same languishing metre suffices him for most of his poems in the volume of 1563, though it is made to look different by splitting each line after the fourth foot.<sup>28</sup> Thus the rhythm is indicated which hymn-writers note as "common measure," e.g., in the long allegorical poem, *Cupido Conquered*, which begins:

Barnabe  
Googe

The sweetest time of all the year  
it was whenas the sun  
Had newly entered Gemini,  
and warming heat begun;

<sup>25</sup> See R. Tuve, "Spenser and *The Zodiac of Life*," *JEGP*, xxxiv (1935), 1-19.

<sup>26</sup> Reprinted, E. Arber, *English Reprints* (1871).

<sup>27</sup> The fourth book alone is reprinted in the New Shakespeare Soc. edition of Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuses* (1877-9), pp. 323-348.

<sup>28</sup> The same metre is employed throughout the eight long satires on the greed of Londoners, which Edward Hake wrote under the title, *News out of Paul's Churchyard*. First printed about 1567, this monotonous but rather informative indictment of clergy, physicians, merchants, usurers, brokers, etc. exists only in the revised edition of 1579 (ed. C. Edmonds, 1872). Hake claimed little for himself as an author, but he issued a considerable number of pamphlets in prose and verse which enjoyed a vogue because of their timeliness and sound Protestant morality. Besides a translation of one of Erasmus' *Colloquies*, the *Diversoria* (ed. H. de Vocht, *The Earliest English Translations of Erasmus' Colloquia*, Louvain, 1928), they include *A Touchstone for This Time Present* (1574), which among other things contains a versified paraphrase of a Latin book on the bringing up of children. In 1575 he produced, likewise in the divided heptameter couplet, *A Commemoration of the Most Prosperous and Peaceable Reign of Our Gracious and Dear Sovereign Lady Elizabeth*; and he lived long enough to greet King James with a volume of mingled verse and prose, *Of God's Kingdom and This Unhelping Age* (1604).

and in the eight eclogues that begin the volume, two of which are versified from the new pastoral prose of Montemayor's *Diana Enamorada* and represent the first impact of that famous work upon English literature.<sup>29</sup> He has no notion of a "sonnet" as a special kind of verse, though his works include two examples of the form.<sup>30</sup> He has a few personal love pleas; epitaphs on a number of warriors and literary men, e.g., Thomas Phaer the translator of Virgil, and Nicholas Grimald; and pleasant addresses to the aged John Bale and the universally admired Richard Edwards. Inspired by his handling of the heptameter, he secures a quasi-classic and pseudo-lyric, but not altogether unagreeable, effect by splitting the lines of ordinary pentameter quatrains at the second foot, as in this invocation to his slowly accomplished translation of Palingenius:

The labor sweet  
that I sustained in thee,  
O Palingene,  
when I took pen in hand,  
Doth grieve me now,  
as oft as I thee see  
But half hewed out  
before mine eyes to stand.

But if that God  
do grant me greater years,  
And take me not  
from hence before my time,  
The Muses nine,  
the pleasant singing feres [companions],  
Shall so inflame  
my mind with lust to rime,  
That, Palingene,  
I will not leave thee so,  
But finish thee  
according to my mind.

George  
Turberville

Descended from an ancient Dorsetshire family, George Turberville<sup>31</sup> (c. 1544-c. 1597) was educated at Winchester and Oxford, but, leaving the university (as Googe had left two) before he graduated, went to one of the Inns of Court in London, where, according to Anthony Wood, "he was much admired for his excellencies in the art of poetry." In 1568 he was sent to Russia as secretary to Thomas Randolph on a mission to secure privileges for English merchants. After his return he served, without distinction, as a captain of militia, committed a homicide in 1573 for which he was duly pardoned, and published verse translations of various Italian *Tragical Tales*, chiefly from Boccaccio (c. 1574), as well as two gentlemanly books in prose:

<sup>29</sup> See T. P. Harrison, "Googe's *Eglogs* and Montemayor's *Diana*," *Univ. Texas Studies in English*, v (1925). 68-78.

<sup>30</sup> See H. H. Hudson, "Sonnetts by Barnabe Googe," *PMLA*, XLVIII (1933). 293-294.

<sup>31</sup> See J. E. Hankins, *The Life and Works of George Turberville* (Lawrence, Kansas, 1940).

*The Book of Falconry or Hawking* and *The Noble Art of Venery or Hunting* (1575). About this time he married, acquired property in his native county, ceased to write further, and illustrated the elegant inconspicuousness for which the young Pope longed:

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,  
Thus unlamented let me die,  
Steal from the world, and not a stone  
Tell where I lie.<sup>32</sup>

It is a typical pattern of early Elizabethan life. After his death, the date and place of which are not recorded, Sir John Harington remembered him with praise:

When rimes were yet but rude, thy pen endeavored  
To polish barbarism with purer style,<sup>33</sup>

but it is hardly more than a likely guess that he was the "good Harpalus, now woxen aged," to whom Spenser dropped a slight tribute in 1591.<sup>34</sup>

Turberville has an important place as a translator and early writer of blank verse;<sup>35</sup> but his original poetry is all contained in a thick little volume, *Epitaphs, Epigrams, Songs, and Sonnets* (1567), and in a supplement of interesting verse letters and other poems from Russia, entitled *Epitaphs and Sonnets* and dated 1569.<sup>36</sup> He dedicates his love poems to a great lady, Anne Countess of Warwick, and ties them loosely into a vague narrative of the adoration of Timetes ("the estimator") for Pandora, or Pindara. They are too prolix and fall too easily into the jog-trot of poulter's measure, but the poet can sometimes build a terse stanza on a different model; e.g.,

To Venus do your due, you senses all,  
And to her son, to whom you are in thrall;  
To Cupid bend thy knee and thanks repay,  
That after linger'd suit and long delay  
Hath brought thy ship to shore.<sup>37</sup>

Turberville writes smoothly, but his language lacks variety and he is too much addicted to the common classical references which a university man was supposed to know. In this respect and others the realistic Russian poems offer relief. Notwithstanding both the titles of his collections, he has no true sonnets, but he was profuse of epitaphs on friends deceased, no less than four of whom were drowned at sea. Some of these—e.g., those on

<sup>32</sup> Pope, *Ode on Solitude*, c. 1709.

<sup>33</sup> *The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington*, ed. Norman E. McClure (Philadelphia, 1930), p. 164.

<sup>34</sup> See J. E. Hankins, "The Harpalus of Spenser's *Colin Clout*," *MLN*, XLIV (1929), 164-167.

<sup>35</sup> His versions of Ovid's *Heroides* and of Mantuan's eclogues (facsimile, ed. D. Bush, 1937) were printed in 1567 and his *Mancinus* in 1568. Mantuan and Mancinus had both been previously translated, in very different style, by Barclay; see above, Part I, ch. IV. Six of the *Heroical Epistles* are rendered in blank verse.

<sup>36</sup> In the only extant edition these are attached to the *Tragical Tales* of 1587 (ed. J. P. Collier, 1867).

<sup>37</sup> "The lover, hoping assuredly of attaining his purpose," etc.

Richard Edwards, the dramatist,<sup>38</sup> and Arthur Brooke, the author of *Romeus and Juliet*—have historic value; and most of them give a pleasant impression of sincerity, for Turberville, like most of the writers of his generation, seems to have been a man of simple and honest heart. He was on terms of easy friendship with Googe, and his epigrams have a pleasanter quality than is usual with the type. Unlike John Heywood, who devised his own epigrams, Turberville found his themes largely in the Latin collection that Janus Cornarius had issued at Basel in 1529. Many of these came from Sir Thomas More, and a still larger proportion derived ultimately from the Greek Anthology.<sup>39</sup>

George  
Gascoigne  
(c. 1539-  
1577)

The richest collection of early Elizabethan poetry is contained in a volume published anonymously in 1573 under the title, *A Hundreth Sundry Flowers Bound up in One Small Posy*.<sup>40</sup> It purports to be gathered together by one "G. T." (who may be George Turberville) and to be written by "Master F. I. and divers others." The first of the contents is an interesting brief novel in prose, *The Adventures of Master F. J.*,<sup>41</sup> which serves as a setting for fourteen poems of considerable merit. Then follow enough other poems to make an even hundred, twenty-one being specifically assigned to George Gascoigne<sup>42</sup> and the rest to other writers allegedly unknown to the editor. At the moment of publication Gascoigne was abroad on military service in Holland; but early in 1575 he published a new edition entitled *The Posies of George Gascoigne Esquire, Corrected, Perfected, and Augmented by the Author*, in which he made little change except to add a long poem that he had written in Holland, *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis*, and to rearrange the

<sup>38</sup> Turberville's volume contains two epitaphs on Edwards, one by Thomas Twine and one by himself.

<sup>39</sup> See H. B. Lathrop, "J. Cornarius's *Selecta Epigrammata Graeca* and the Early English Epigrammatists," *MLN*, XLIII (1928), 223-229. The historian of the English epigram, if any one were to essay that sad task, would have to consider Timothy Kendall's *Flowers of Epigrams* (1577), which are mainly translated or adapted; and also Robert Crowley's very different and earlier *One and Thirty Epigrams* (1550). Crowley (c. 1518-1588) was a remarkable minor character, a Puritan printer and preacher, at one time archdeacon of Hereford and vicar of St. Giles Cripplegate in London. He issued the first printed edition of Langland's *Piers Plowman* in 1550, and also printed his own poetical works, which deal with religious and social abuses and are in doggerel verse of considerable ingenuity. The best is *The Fable of Philargyrie, the Great Gigant [giant] of Great Britain* (reprint, W. A. Marsden, 1931). A somewhat better poet, closely contemporary with Turberville, is Thomas Howell, whose *Arbor of Amity* appeared in 1568 and his *New Sonnets and Pretty Pamphlets* soon afterwards. The most interesting poems are perhaps "Jack shows his qualities and great good will to Joan," which is in the southwestern dialect, and "A dialogue touching the matrimonial degrec." One is in each volume. In 1581 Howell published another collection of miscellaneous lyrics, *Howell his Devises, for his Own Exercise and his Friends' Pleasure*, with a dedication to Lady Pembroke. All these are reprinted by Grosart, *The Poems of Thomas Howell* (1879), and Howell's *Devises* by Sir W. Raleigh (Oxford, 1906). Still more in Turberville's style is a somewhat later poet, Matthew Grove, whose "pleasant devises, epigrams, songs, and sonnets" are attached to his only book, the verse narrative *History of Pelops and Hippodamia* (1587). Grove usually writes in poulter's measure, and his love verses, though fluent, are commonly dolorous.

<sup>40</sup> Reprinted (incompletely) with Introduction by B. M. Ward (1926).

<sup>41</sup> See below, ch. III.

<sup>42</sup> See *The Works of George Gascoigne*, ed. J. W. Cunliffe (2v, Cambridge, 1907-10); S. A. Tannenbaum, *George Gascoigne, a Concise Bibliography* (1942). A long series of articles on Gascoigne's life and works will be found in *RES*, beginning with Vol. II (1926) and continuing to Vol. XIV (1938). The scholarship is soundly digested and valuable new facts added in C. T. Prouty, *George Gascoigne, Elizabethan Courtier, Soldier, and Poet* (1942).



order of contents, according to a fantastic judgment of their moral value, into "flowers," "herbs," and "weeds." Gascoigne avowed his authorship of the entire volume, nineteen contemporaries contributed commendatory verses on the same assumption, and there seems to be no good reason for doubting it.<sup>43</sup> In fact several poems ascribed to other writers in the earlier version bear definite evidence of his authorship,<sup>44</sup> and they all have an evenness of technique that suggests a single writer.

In his *Notes of Instruction Concerning the Making of Verse*, which is appended to the 1575 volume, Gascoigne admits that contemporary English poetry is written exclusively in iambic measure, and he makes little effort to extend its metrical range. Poulter's measure, the sonnet of three quatrains and couplet, the six-line (quatrain and couplet) stanza, and rime royal are the only forms he uses much, but he uses these with commendable ease and accuracy. This soldier-poet's verse is notably well drilled. The lines march regularly and effectively, with little individual brilliance and without faults of rhythm. Within his limitations, which were the general limitations of his age, Gascoigne is both a fine and an interesting workman; he has two rather effective experiments in sonnet-linking,<sup>45</sup> and the series of poems which he calls his "Memories" shows a high degree of virtuosity in the forms that he exploited. His love poems often have grace, but they bear the yoke of early Elizabethan morality. Though he apologized for their boldness and segregated a number of them among his "Weeds," they are conventional enough, and bear out his remark that "if ever I wrote a line for myself in causes of love, I have written ten for other men." He is best perhaps as a narrator in verse and a social critic. The long amatory woes of *Philomene*, Dan Bartholmew of Bath, and of the Green Knight, show how suspect emotional freedom was to Englishmen who had grown up in the years of religious intolerance. The extended Erasmian opening of *Dulce Bellum Inexpertis* and the still longer *Steel Glass*<sup>46</sup> in blank verse show how the manner of the preacher still clung to the poet. Gascoigne is less self-conscious in the latter part of *Dulce Bellum*, where he is relating his own experiences; and in the vividly bitter narrative of his shipwreck in Holland.<sup>47</sup> His earlier masque for the Montacute weddings includes accounts of the recent capture of Famagusta in Cyprus by the Turks<sup>48</sup> and of the battle of Lepanto (both in 1571).

Gascoigne's literary patron was Lord Grey of Wilton, who less than ten years later was receiving the poetical homages of Spenser. By that time

<sup>43</sup> See W. W. Greg, "A Hundreth Sundry Flowers," *Library*, vii (1926). 269-282; viii (1927). 123-130; F. T. Bowers, "Notes on Gascoigne's 'A Hundreth Sundrie Floweres' and 'The Posies,'" *Harvard Studies & Notes in Phil. & Lit.*, xvi (1934). 13-35.

<sup>44</sup> E.g., Cambridge ed., Vol. 1, p. 502, which contains an anagram of his name ("GASCON"); and p. 47, where in the 1573 edition G. G.'s initials twice appear, "the author" being substituted in 1575.

<sup>45</sup> Cambridge ed., p. 388 f., 463 f.

<sup>46</sup> This historically important satire was written late and printed with *Philomene* in 1576.

<sup>47</sup> Cambridge ed., pp. 354-363.

<sup>48</sup> See R. R. Cawley, "George Gascoigne and the Siege of Famagusta," *MLN*, XLIII (1928). 296-300.

Gascoigne was dead. In the two years between his death and the appearance of the *Shepherds' Calendar* poetry passed over a mighty watershed and Gascoigne's work, so broadly representative of the early Elizabethan effort, became only a landmark in the past. Nashe can remember him kindly in 1589 as the one "who first beat the path to that perfection which our best poets have aspired to since his departure,"<sup>49</sup> but for Sir John Davies it is the mere height of absurdity in a newfangled youth that he should "praise old George Gascoigne's rimes."<sup>50</sup> Fate was kinder to him than to his less gifted and longer-lived companions: George Whetstone<sup>51</sup> (c. 1544-c. 1587), who bemoaned him in numerous but uninspired stanzas, *A Remembrance of the Well Employed Life and Godly End of George Gascoigne Esquire*; and Thomas Churchyard (c. 1520-1604), who went on lisping the obsolete strains through the music of a greater age.<sup>52</sup>

Thomas  
Tusser

Thomas Tusser (c. 1525-1580), a gentleman of good birth like Gascoigne, and a graduate of Eton and Cambridge, became the laureate of the early Elizabethan farm, as Gascoigne was of the court and camp; and Tusser's verses held their vogue much longer. They are no more for the most part than doggerel directions, covering all the activities of country folk through the year, but their concrete homeliness and vivid sense of time and place give them a natural poetry. Published originally by Richard Tottel (in the year of his famous Miscellany, 1557) under the modest title, *A Hundreth Good Points of Husbandry*, they were later much expanded, embellished with new pictures and a quaint metrical autobiography of Tusser, and thus developed into a countryman's classic which has hardly been out of print from that day to this, except in the unbucolic period of the later eighteenth century.<sup>53</sup>

Robert  
Southwell

A much younger and essentially greater poet may find mention here, for only chronologically, not at all in spirit, does he belong with the later movement led by Spenser, Sidney, and Marlowe. Robert Southwell<sup>54</sup> (1561-1595), the Jesuit martyr, left a number of devotional works in mannered prose<sup>55</sup> and a priceless apology for his co-religionists, written with fervent simplicity and entitled *An Humble Supplication to Her Majesty* (1595). He left also a long poem in 132 six-line stanzas, *St. Peter's Complaint*,<sup>56</sup> based

<sup>49</sup> McKerrow, *Works of Thomas Nashe*, III. 319.

<sup>50</sup> Epigram 22, "In Cyprium."

<sup>51</sup> See Thomas C. Izard, *George Whetstone, Mid-Elizabethan Gentleman of Letters* (1942).

<sup>52</sup> Those who wish to linger over the mild fragrance of this bygone day may find it in *A Posie of Gilloflowers* by Humphrey Gifford, 1580 (Hawthornden Press, 1933). Gifford was a Devonshire schoolmaster of serious temper, using mainly the six-line stanza, but he sometimes shows liveliness, variety, and foreign influence. His most vigorous poem, in irregular long lines, is entitled *For Soldiers*.

<sup>53</sup> Two editions appeared in 1931: *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry, with an Introduction by Sir Walter Scott and a Benediction by Rudyard Kipling*, and D. Hartley, *Thomas Tusser . . . his Good Points of Husbandry*.

<sup>54</sup> See A. B. Grosart, *The Complete Poems of Robert Southwell* (1872); C. M. Hood, *The Book of Robert Southwell* (life and a selection of his poems; Oxford, 1926); P. Janelle, *Robert Southwell, the Writer* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1935).

<sup>55</sup> Ed. W. J. Walter (1828).

<sup>56</sup> Concerning an inferior poem in the same metre, doubtfully ascribed to Southwell, see H. J. L. Robbie, "The Authorship of *A Fourfold Meditation*," *RES*, v (1929). 200-202. Two other long poems in this stanza, strongly influenced by Southwell, are ascribed to Gervase



on an Italian work of similar title and content by Luigi Tansillo. His literary fame rests, however, on his exalted religious lyrics, which were written in prison and published in the year of his execution, partly as a supplement to *St. Peter's Complaint*, and partly in a separate volume, *Maeoniae* (i.e., Lydian Muses).

Southwell had been educated by the Jesuits abroad, at Douai, Paris, and Rome, and he wrote verse in Latin as well as in his native tongue. His English prosody is old-fashioned, suggesting Gascoigne or Turberville. He does not use the sonnet or *ottava rima*, though both must have been familiar to him in Italy; and only seldom ventures beyond the old six-line stanza and the long couplet of six, seven, or eight stresses. The sweet and often mystical fervor which he can put into these hackneyed forms is evidenced in *A Child My Choice*:

Let folly praise that [i.e., what] fancy loves, I praise and love that Child,  
Whose heart no thought, whose tongue no word, whose hand no deed defil'd.  
I praise Him most, I love Him best, all praise and love is His;  
While Him I love; in Him I live, and cannot live amiss;

or in the memorable conclusion of his best known poem, *The Burning Babe*,

With this He vanish'd out of sight, and swiftly shrank away,  
And straight I called unto mind that it was Christmas Day.

He has a homely and saintly simplicity that reminds one occasionally of Francis Thompson, as in the fine poem, *Upon the Image of Death*:

The gown that I do use to wear,  
The knife wherewith I cut my meat,  
And eke the old and ancient chair  
Which is my only usual seat:  
All these do tell me I must die,  
And yet my life amend not I.

As befitted his training, he is fond of gnomic wisdom, which he converts to pious purposes; and in *A Vale of Tears* he rather surprisingly fits his emotion to the well observed scenery of an Alpine valley. Without a tinge of the preciousness and metrical genius of George Herbert, Southwell possessed much of that poet's religious charm; and it is to the credit of his countrymen that, though he died a felon's death, his works, both in prose and verse, long enjoyed in England a wide and reverent esteem.

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Markham; viz., *The Tears of the Beloved, or the Lamentations of St. John* (1600), and *Mary Magdalen's Lamentations for the Loss of her Master Jesus* (1601). These are reprinted in Grosart's *Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies Library* (1871).

## II

### Verse Narrative

A Mirror for  
Magistrates

The high esteem in which the early Tudor readers held the moral works of Lydgate has been evident in many of the poems hitherto discussed; but nothing in Lydgate appealed more than the series of tragic histories which he had borrowed from Boccaccio under the title of *The Fall of Princes*, and which the lurid revolutions of Fortune's wheel in the second quarter of the sixteenth century brought back to men's attention with a melancholy immediacy. It is very natural, therefore, that two new editions of Lydgate's *Fall* were printed early in Queen Mary's reign. One was published by Tottel in 1554; the other by the Queen's printer, John Wayland, in 1554 or 1555. Wayland's intention was originally more ambitious, for there exist, in a single copy, a canceled title-page and prefatory note, stating that the book contained, in addition to Lydgate's work, "the fall of all such as since that time were notable in England, diligently collected out of the chronicles," and "penned by the best clerks in such kind of matters that be this day living, not unworthy to be matched with Master Lydgate." However, Queen Mary's chancellor, Stephen Gardiner, prohibited the modern section, which was not permitted to appear till Elizabeth had succeeded to the throne. It was first published in 1559 under the title, *A Mirror for Magistrates*,<sup>1</sup> and, separate henceforth from Lydgate, ran a career perhaps more complex and influential than that of any other Elizabethan book.

The first edition mirrors the instability of fortune and punishment of vice in nineteen historical tales from the century between Richard II's reign and Edward IV's (1377-1483), the reader being constantly reminded that "the only thing which is purposed herein is by example of others' miseries to dissuade all men from all sins and vices." The prose introductions dramatize a scene which must have been reenacted whenever a group of collaborating playwrights later met to plan a history play for the theatre. In this case, William Baldwin,<sup>2</sup> the chief author in question and printer's agent, meets by appointment with George Ferrers (c. 1500-1579) and five other gentlemen in a room where, till nightfall, they turn over the pages of Hall's and Fabyan's *Chronicles* and prepare their copy for the new book. Each reads

<sup>1</sup> See *The Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. from the original texts by Lily B. Campbell (Cambridge, 1938) and *Parts Added to The Mirror for Magistrates by John Higgins and Thomas Blenerhasset*, ed. Lily B. Campbell (Cambridge, 1946); and, by the same author, *Tudor Conceptions of History and Tragedy in A Mirror for Magistrates* (Berkeley, 1936). On the historical poems treated in this chapter see Homer Nearing, *English Historical Poetry, 1599-1641* (Philadelphia, 1945). *Magistrate* here means what Sir Thomas Elyot meant by *Governor*, a man possessed of great public responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Part I, ch. II; Eveline I. Feasey, "William Baldwin," *MLR*, xx (1925). 407-418.

for the others' criticism the lives that he has written, and they are reviewed against the chroniclers' narrative. The poems take the form of dramatic monologues, in which the nineteen unfortunates comment upon their lives, usually in the rime royal that was the conventional literary speech of great personages.<sup>3</sup>

The first edition of the *Mirror for Magistrates* has much historic significance, but no poetic value. Any judicious reader would rate its contents from poor to middling. The second edition, in 1563, added eight other lives, and among them one by a new and young writer which strangely outshines all the rest. Thomas Sackville (1536-1608) handles the rime royal as few poets have done since Chaucer, and even Chaucer, though far greater in pure narrative, has left little to equal the *Complaint of Henry Duke of Buckingham* for dark beauty and sustained emotion. Thomas  
Sackville

One of the qualities by which Sackville towers over all the other poets of the *Mirror* is his fastidious feeling for words, as in the perfect line,

In dreadful fear amid the dreadful place.<sup>4</sup>

Another is his feeling for the solemn aspects of external nature, e.g.,

Midnight was come, and every vital thing  
With sweet sound sleep their weary limbs did rest;  
The beasts were still, the little birds that sing  
Now sweetly slept beside their mother's breast;  
The old and all were shrouded in their nest:  
The waters calm, the cruel seas did cease;  
The woods, the fields, and all things held their peace.

This passage is from the *Complaint* proper, but Sackville's finest poetry is found rather in the 550 preliminary lines printed in the 1563 text as "The Induction," though the holograph manuscript at Cambridge does not so separate them.<sup>5</sup> Here, quite outside the Lydgatian frame that confined the other contributors to the *Mirror*, Sackville has written a great independent poem that has three parts: the picture of a winter evening; a Dantesque meeting with a tremendous abstraction, Sorrow; and a Virgilian journey to Hell. This is indeed, to quote a judgment no less true than trite, "the best poetry written in the English language between Chaucer and Spenser."<sup>6</sup>

Where the other poets of the *Mirror* sought a moral and a rule for life, Sackville sought and found the uplifting tenderness of tragedy, present for him particularly in the heartbreak he feels at the fate of Troy:

Not worthy Hector, worthiest of them all,  
Her hope, her joy! his force is now for nought.  
O Troy, Troy, there is no boot but bale.

<sup>3</sup> However, Richard II uses a difficult ten-line stanza, Henry VI an adaptation of poulter's measure, and Edward IV speaks the poem Skelton had written for him in twelve-line stanzas.

<sup>4</sup> *Induction*, line 217.

<sup>5</sup> See M. Hearsey, *The Complaint of Henry Duke of Buckingham* (New Haven, 1936); Fitzroy Pyle, "Thomas Sackville and *A Mirror for Magistrates*," *RES*, xiv (1938), 315-321.

<sup>6</sup> G. Saintsbury, *A History of Elizabethan Literature* (1887), p. 11.

The hugy horse within thy walls is brought;  
 Thy turrets fall, thy knights, that whilom fought  
 In arms amid the field, are slain in bed,  
 Thy gods defil'd, and all thy honor dead.

If this recalls Chaucer, as it does, it has also the feel of Shakespeare; and Shakespeare seems close in Sackville's picture of nightfall,

When, lo, the night, with misty mantles spred,  
 Gan dark the day and dim the azure skies;<sup>7</sup>

or of sleep,

The body's rest, the quiet of the heart,  
 The travail's ease, the still night's fere [mate] was he,  
 And of our life in earth the better part;  
 Reaver of sight, and yet in whom we see  
 Things oft that tide, and oft that never be;  
 Without respect esteeming equally  
 King Croesus' pomp and Irus' poverty;<sup>8</sup>

most of all, however, when the Induction ends with the evocation of the ghost of Buckingham,

Then first came Henry duke of Buckingham . . .  
 Wringing his hands, and Fortune oft doth blame,

for this was the last ghost in the terrifying procession that appeared before Shakespeare's Richard III at Bosworth:

The first was I that help'd thee to the crown;  
 The last was I that felt thy tyranny.  
 O, in the battle think on Buckingham!

Churchyard,  
 Shore's  
 Wife

One other contribution to the second edition of the *Mirror for Magistrates* reaches a notable, though much lower, poetic level. It is the *chef d'œuvre* of Thomas Churchyard, whose sentimental vein found an apt subject in the story of Jane Shore, the royal mistress. His *Shore's Wife* became highly popular and made her a dependable theme to point a moral or adorn a play down to the time of Nicholas Rowe (1714). Two of Churchyard's lines struck a spark in Marlowe's brain, for he made Jane say of her enticing friends,

They brake the boughs and shak'd the tree by sleight,  
 And bent the wand that might have grown full straight.<sup>9</sup>

Upon this hint the greater poet spoke (though he was also thinking of Psalm 80: 15) when he wrote the epilogue to *Faustus*,

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight.

<sup>7</sup> Compare *Hamlet*, I. i. 166.

<sup>8</sup> Compare *Macbeth*, II. ii. 36 ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Mirror*, ed. Campbell, p. 379. The parallel was noted by Henry Morley and also by A. Thaler, *MLN*, xxxviii (1923). 89-92.

Other editions of the *Mirror* followed in 1571, 1574, 1575, 1578, and 1587, with great masses of new material by John Higgins and Thomas Blennerhasset, which carried the story back to the legendary years of Locrine, Lear, and King Arthur. The series was not complete till the edition of Richard Niccols in 1610, "newly enlarged with a last part called *A Winter Night's Vision*," in which 91 tales appear, the last a long tribute to "England's Eliza." It is impossible to estimate the effect of all this motley work upon the Elizabethan taste and point of view. At least twenty-five of the sections dramatize characters conspicuous in Shakespeare's plays, and the relation to other historical dramas is hardly less close. The same material could, indeed, be generally found in Holinshed or Hall, but it is questionable whether the playwrights would have thought of using it so largely, if the *Mirror* had not already carried it such a long way toward the stage.

*Later Editions of the Mirror*

The *Mirror for Magistrates* also produced a liking for historical narrative in verse which stimulated work by some of the best known as well as some of the obscurest poets. One of the latter is the author of *Throckmorton's Ghost*, preserved in several old manuscripts. In the printed edition<sup>10</sup> it runs to 229 six-line stanzas of only moderate poetic quality but of much interest, for it plausibly purports to be written by a nephew of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton (1515-1571), whose ghost visits him to warn him against ambition by relating his own chequered career. A few minor slips in detail may increase the probability that this is a genuine family document. As a record of the ups and downs, private hopes and fears, and domestic relations of a pushing aristocrat, from the close of Henry VIII's reign till well into Elizabeth's, this poem deserves more notice than it has had. Spenser's *Ruins of Time* shows how a budding genius might treat this type of poetry, and *The Ghost of Richard III* by Christopher Brooke<sup>11</sup> (1614) shows how it could be fitted to the systematic character-dissection that Donne and his friends admired. The author was Donne's intimate, and received commendatory verses from Chapman, Wither, and Jonson. He writes in the *ottava rima* stanza that Daniel and Drayton had brought in, and at great length psychoanalyzes the villain-hero whom Shakespeare's play had made notorious.

*Imitations of the Mirror*

William Warner (c. 1558-1609) frankly aimed at the reader's amusement in *Albion's England*, which, first printed in 1586 while the *Mirror* was still in hot demand, augmented itself through six or seven editions in the next quarter-century, and, with a "continuance" in 1606, finally reached sixteen books. Warner writes in "fourteener" couplets, and for his dedicatory epistles employs a highly Euphuistic prose. The first two books are a compendium of mythology, after the manner of the Troy Books, from the Flood to Brute, the legendary founder of Britain. Book III begins with the story of Lear and is closely followed by that of Gorboduc; but before long Warner gives up serious effort to be historic and becomes a narrator of pleasant tales. That of Curan, the disguised prince, and the afflicted princess

*William Warner, Albion's England*

<sup>10</sup> Ed. J. G. Nichols (Roxburghe Club, 1874).

<sup>11</sup> Ed. J. P. Collier (Shakespeare Soc., 1844).

Heywood,  
Great Britain's  
Troy

Argentile (chapter xx) is one of the best and may have suggested to Shakespeare the name of a minor character in *King Lear*.

In the year of Warner's death appeared another very long poem which is still conspicuously in the Elizabethan style: Thomas Heywood's *Troia Britannica, or Great Britain's Troy* (1609). It is in the then fashionable *ottava rima*, but covers much the same material as *Albion's England*, though with a difference of emphasis. Of the seventeen books fifteen poetize the mythological and Trojan events in Caxton's *Troy Book*, and the last two run over British history from Brute to James I. There is considerable interest in this poem. Nineteen stanzas of the last book recapitulate the incidents of Elizabeth's reign, and modern affairs are often introduced episodically in earlier sections; e.g., the fight of the "Revenge" in Book v, the coronation celebration of James and Anna in Book iv, and Queen Elizabeth's treatment of transgressing maids in Book iii:

So did our Cynthia chastity prefer,  
The most admired queen that ever reign'd:  
If any of her virgin train did err,  
Or with the like offence their honors stain'd,  
From her imperial court she banish'd her,  
And a perpetual exile she remain'd.

Into Books ix and x Heywood introduced translations (in couplets) of the Ovidian epistles of Paris to Helen and Helen to Paris, which his publisher, Jaggard, impudently stole in order to eke out the scanty poetry of *The Passionate Pilgrim*—a circumstance that has given us one of the pleasantest anecdotes of Shakespeare.

Samuel Daniel<sup>12</sup> (1562-1619) is seldom mentioned without praise, and not often read without weariness. He is naturally bracketed with Drayton. They were of the same age and gentlemanly social order, served the same type of patroness, and in a well-bred way were very conscious of their rivalry. Since both were prolific, industrious, and conventional, it is natural that they produced the same kind of poetry: sonnets, pastorals, occasional verse, and particularly historical poems. Drayton, with more lyric power and more enthusiasm, and much more sense of humor and of fantasy, extended beyond these limits, and he is the better poet. "Well-linguaged"<sup>13</sup> Daniel is the more correct and judicial. Indeed, the suavity, clarity, and seemingly modern quality of his verses are always surprising to a reader who comes upon them in an Elizabethan miscellany. His highest feats are the philosophic verse letters, like the famous one to the Countess of Cumberland, beginning,

He that of such a height hath built his mind,

<sup>12</sup> *Complete Works*, ed. A. B. Grosart (5v, 1885-96); *Poems and a Defence of Ryme*, ed. A. C. Sprague (Cambridge, Mass., 1930); S. A. Tannenbaum, *Samuel Daniel, a Concise Bibliography* (1942).

<sup>13</sup> The title was conferred upon him by William Browne of Tavistock.

or the discourse between Ulysses and the Siren, which say noble and timeless truths with a Chinese gravity.

Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond* (1592) gave a new lease of life to the *Daniel's Rosamond* *Mirror for Magistrates* type of poetry by turning it into a mirror for fair ladies. He uses the old device of the ghostly visitant bewailing in rime royal, and admits his debt to *Shore's Wife*; but Daniel endows his damned lady with all the upper-class sensibilities, and by introducing a graceful reference to his own virtuous Delia at the end makes it the kind of poem one could send one's niece with the ingratiating endorsement, "Look here upon this picture, and on this." *The Civil Wars between the Two Houses of Lancaster and York* (1595, 1609) treats in leisurely *ottava rima* verse the stormy period that Shakespeare covers from *Richard II* to *Henry VI*. After eight long books Daniel left it incomplete and turned to history in prose. It has gracious passages; those dealing with Richard II's queen may have offered hints to Shakespeare. One can understand how the Countess of Pembroke, to whom it is dedicated, may have liked its elegiac gentleness, but her brother Sidney would not. It gives an effect of violent actions portrayed in slow motion, and is sometimes a little absurd.

Drayton's devotion to the historical muse was unceasing and in his own day well rewarded, but has done little for his fame.<sup>14</sup> He tried nearly every variation that could be worked out of the *Mirror* type of poem, and was incredibly industrious in the work of revising. *Piers Gaveston* (1593) allows the ghost of that worthy to tell his story in nearly three hundred six-line stanzas. *Matilda* (1594), in avowed rivalry with Daniel's *Rosamond*, Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, and Churchyard's *Jane Shore*, employs rime royal; as does *The Tragical Legend of Robert Duke of Normandy* (1596), which attempts to add attractiveness to the chequered career of William the Conqueror's eldest son by a dream-setting concerned with a contest between Fortune and Fame. *Mortimeriados*<sup>15</sup> (1596) is a sequel to *Gaveston*; the two poems cover the events related in Marlowe's *Edward II*, and do so at considerably greater length, but with less human interest. Before Drayton's collected works appeared in 1619, *Mortimeriados* had been altered from rime royal to *ottava rima*, lengthened, divided into six cantos, and renamed *The Barons' Wars*. One shudders to think of the labor this cost. Practically every rime was changed, and practically every clause reworded; yet at the end the poem remains much the same as before. In the time spent on aesthetically trifling improvements of these popular historical poems Drayton could have turned off many more gems like *Nymphidia*; he could even have carried *Poly-Olbion* into Scotland. However, one may admit that the sixth book of *The Barons' Wars* is a very pleasing and variegated poem, and no doubt the best thing Drayton has done of this sort. *The Legend of Great Cromwell* (1607),

<sup>14</sup> See *Works*, Tercentenary Ed., ed. J. W. Hebel (4v, 1931-35; 5th vol., ed. K. Tillotson and B. H. Newdigate, 1941); Oliver Elton, *Michael Drayton, a Critical Study* (1905); B. H. Newdigate, *Michael Drayton and his Circle* (1941).

<sup>15</sup> I.e., *Mortimerias* "the story of Mortimer." Following classical precedent, the title-page uses the Greek genitive case.



probably suggested by the play on the subject, "by W. S.", in 1602, shows his afflatus very much reduced.<sup>16</sup>

With characteristic energy Drayton tried another method in *England's Heroical Epistles* (1597-1602), in which the subject matter of the *Mirror* is handled in the fashion of Ovid's *Heroides*. Twelve pairs of famous English lovers, beginning with Henry II and Rosamond and concluding with Lady Jane Grey and Guildford Dudley, write long letters to each other in couplet rime. To us this series seems sadly lacking in variety and heavily overcharged with platitude, but Drayton's readers loved it through six editions.

Romeus  
and Juliet

Free romantic invention did not flourish on early Elizabethan soil, doubtless because of the strong inhibitions the poets of that time always confessed. A single remarkable, and very early, example there was in the *Romeus and Juliet* of Arthur Brooke, which Tottel published in 1562.<sup>17</sup> The plot was developed from a prose tale in a recent French collection by Pierre Boaistuau or Boaistuan (1559), who had imported it from Italy. Brooke's poem, as is well known, served Shakespeare a generation later for his first significant tragedy, and it is surprising to remind oneself how completely the dramatist's characters and incidents are in the poem. It required genius to discover their value, for they lie buried beneath three thousand lines of venomously verbose poulter's measure. This is the more distressing as the young author, who was drowned the next year and left no other imaginative work, shows in his prefatory sonnets that he could write very like a poet in that form. Poulter's measure may have been a protective device, lest he appear Italianate. His horrid epistle to the reader is clearly protective:

The glorious triumph of the continent man upon the lusts of wanton flesh encourageth men to honest restraint of wild affections; the shameful and wretched ends of such as have yielded their liberty thrall to foul desires teach men to withhold themselves from the headlong fall of loose dishonesty . . . And to this end, good Reader, is this tragical matter written, to describe unto thee a couple of unfortunate lovers, thralling themselves to dishonest desire; neglecting the authority and advice of parents and friends; conferring their principal counsels with drunken gossips and superstitious friars . . . attempting all adventures of peril for th' attaining of their wished lust; using auricular confession . . . abusing the honorable name of lawful marriage to cloak the shame of stolen contracts; finally by all means of dishonest life hastening to most unhappy death.

<sup>16</sup> See K. Tillotson, "Michael Drayton as a 'Historian' in the *Legend of Cromwell*," *MLR*, xxxiv (1939). 186-200. Concerning another long poem of about this same date, *Leicester's Ghost* by Thomas Rogers (c. 1575-1609), see F. B. Williams, Jr., "Thomas Rogers of Bryanston," *Harvard Studies & Notes in Phil. & Lit.*, xvi (1934). 253-267. Drayton's much later *Battle of Agincourt* and *Miseries of Queen Margaret* suffered by being published in the same volume with *Nymphidia* (1627), and the former, a long historical account in 2500 ottava rima lines, has been practically wiped out of literary memory by the poet's more famous *Ballad of Agincourt* (1619).

<sup>17</sup> Ed. J. J. Munro (*Shakespeare Classics*, 1908). Note also Edward Lewicke's uninspired metrical version of a very popular legend in his *Titus and Gisippus* (ed. H. G. Wright, *Tales from the Decameron*, 1937; *EETS*, 205, pp. 174-216), which was printed in the same year as *Romeus and Juliet*.



The poem itself nowhere suggests this sinister moral. The need to use it as a red herring may explain why nearly all narrative poetry of romantic coloring clung to the respectable themes of English history or classic myth. Though *Romeus and Juliet* was twice reprinted, it was very little imitated.<sup>18</sup>

Elizabethan narrative poets owed much to Virgil, who influenced them not only in his Latin, but also in the extraordinary variety of taste and metre represented through the translations of the *Æneid* by Gavin Douglas, Surrey, Phaer and Twyne, and Stanyhurst. Nicholas Grimald's two set-pieces, *The Death of Zoroas* and *Cicero's Death*,<sup>19</sup> must also have been much studied. Neither is strictly mythological, or even classical in a narrow sense, but they ranked as such, had a key position in Tottel's Miscellany, and, with Surrey's *Æneid*, were the earliest examples in English of the new "strange metre," blank verse.

Virgilian  
Influences

The poetical anthologies following Tottel have their more lyrical contents interspersed with mythological tales, and half a dozen separate poems based on Ovid appeared in the 1560's;<sup>20</sup> but the most influential poems of this type, and one might almost add, the most characteristically Elizabethan, were the direct translations of Ovid. Turberville's rendering of the *Heroides* (1567) is careful and intelligent work, particularly interesting because it shows the poet experimenting with three media: poulter's measure, "fourteeners," and blank verse. It went into at least half a dozen editions, but was outdone by Arthur Golding's contemporary version of the *Metamorphoses* (1565, 1567),<sup>21</sup> which is more rugged poetry. The heptameter riming couplet, which Golding uses throughout, has nothing in common with the Latin hexameter except its length of line, and Golding's handling of it does little to conceal its fundamental lack of grace and variety. Nor is it likely that the delicately decadent Ovid ever had a translator more unlike him than this stout Calvinist,<sup>22</sup> whose effort was to force a serious moral interpretation upon the stories of the loves of the gods. It is probable and fortunate that Shakespeare read Ovid also in the original, but Golding's particular influence was very great. For example, from the philosophical verse epistle which Golding added in dedicating his translation to the Earl of Leicester, Shakespeare drew the conception of the "wheel of time" which he employs so brilliantly in his Sonnets,<sup>23</sup> and also the Puritan denunciation

Renderings  
of Ovid

Golding's  
Ovid

<sup>18</sup> In this strain are Turberville's verse translations of ten Italian prose *novelle*, seven by Boccaccio (*Tragical Tales*, 1576?, 1587); and Gascoigne's *Dan Bartholmew of Bath* (1573). Particularly notable are three verse narratives in George Whetstone's *Rock of Regard* (1576). Two of these are rime royal "complaints" in the *Mirror for Magistrates* style, set in the mouths of the wicked Countess of Celant and of Cressida respectively. The third, in riming heptameter, tells a romantic story of Bohemian and Hungarian knights with affinity to the wager plot in *Cymbeline* and, more closely, to the plot of Massinger's play, *The Picture*. Whetstone's chief source is Painter's prose *Palace of Pleasure*.

<sup>19</sup> See L. R. Merrill, *The Life and Poems of Nicholas Grimald* (New Haven, 1925).

<sup>20</sup> See D. Bush, *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry* (Minneapolis, 1932), pp. 301 ff, and "Classic Myths in English Verse, 1557-1589," *MP*, xxv (1927). 37-47.

<sup>21</sup> Ed. W. H. D. Rouse, *Shakespeare's Ovid* (1904).

<sup>22</sup> See L. T. Golding, *An Elizabethan Puritan* (1937).

<sup>23</sup> See Sidney Lee, "Ovid and Shakespeare's Sonnets," *Elizabethan and Other Essays* (1929), pp. 116-139.

of the theory of transmigration of souls, alluded to when Malvolio is asked, "What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?"<sup>24</sup> Likewise, in the thirteenth book, it is Golding's railing Ajax and Ulysses, rather than their originals, that suggest Shakespeare's presentation of them in *Troilus and Cressida*.

*Imitations  
of Ovid*

It was some time before imitations of Ovid appeared in any number or worthiness. One of the earliest is Gascoigne's *Philomene*, which has an interesting history. He was riming it one day in April, 1562, "riding by the highway between Chelmsford and London," when a shower diverted his thoughts, and fourteen years passed before he completed it. It is a long poem, blending Ovidian narrative with the medieval dream vision, and is a good deal a song of the road, vigorous in narrative and full of bird notes and spring air. Matthew Grove's *Pelops and Hippodamia* (1587) tells a good story in Golding's metre and perhaps suffered from its antique style, for it had no success. Peele's *Tale of Troy* (1598) has the quaint flavor that usually attaches to the work of that interesting person. It is unlike any other piece of the time, and the particular occasion for it does not appear. Perhaps it represents an assembling of notes for *The Arraignment of Paris*, which it most likely preceded in date of composition; perhaps it was written on order from some unlearned citizen. In five hundred semi-jocose and negligently riming pentameters Peele digests all that one should know about the Troy business—skilfully, but with a cock of the eye.

*Peele's Tale  
of Troy*

*Lodge,  
Scylla's  
Metamor-  
phosis*

Graceful description makes the merit of Lodge's long poem, *Scylla's Metamorphosis* (1589). It uses Ovid only as the nucleus of its story, and to readers who did not yet know Marlowe's or Shakespeare's powers in this style must rightly have seemed a pretty piece of invention. The six-line stanza is well modulated, and the tale moves pleasantly, bringing Glaucus the sea-god up the Thames to exchange sympathy with a modern lover, and later carrying them both (on dolphins for two) back to the waters of Sicily to attend the punishment of the heartless fair. Abraham Fraunce's *Amintas Dale* (1592) attempts to retell the salient tales of the *Metamorphoses* in sixteen examples of English hexameter verse, inset in pastoral prose. It is interesting chiefly as a metrical audacity.

*The Heyday  
of Amatory  
Verse*

The heyday of Elizabethan amatory verse was reached by the year 1594. The sonneteering carnival was at its height; Marlowe's great love poem and Shakespeare's two were out. The air was drowsy with languorous descriptions of fruit, birds, flowers, and the life of the senses. The two long poems of Thomas Edwards, *Cephalus and Procris* and *Narcissus*,<sup>25</sup> show with what copious though unthinking enthusiasm a minor writer could at this time set himself to out-Ovid Ovid. In *Cephalus and Procris* Edwards is more particularly imitating Marlowe, and in the other poem Shakespeare, but both these influences are discernible in either work. The Envoy to *Narcissus* has some notable lines on the late decease of Marlowe and his friend Thomas

<sup>24</sup> *Twelfth Night*, iv. ii. 55; Golding's Epistle, line 26.

<sup>25</sup> Entered Oct. 22, 1593, printed 1595; ed. W. E. Buckley (*Roxburghe Club*, 1882).

Watson (c. 1555-1592), whose Latin *Amintae Gaudia* of 1592<sup>26</sup> was in much the same amorous style:

Amintas and Leander's gone.  
O dear sons of stately kings,  
Blessed be your nimble throats,  
That so amorously could sing!

Marlowe's empty-headed admirer, Henry Petowe, marks a yet lower descent into day-dreaming absurdity. He had not the brains to be consistently Ovidian or anything else, but he luxuriated in romantic images and could spin well-sounding couplets and sixains. His *Hero and Leander's Further Fortunes* (1598) treats the myth as if it were an Italian novella and gives it a perfectly unclassical happy ending. His *Philochasander and Elanira* (1599) is rather more lyrical than narrative. It seems to have a medieval plot, but handles it most inconsequently.

In 1594 Chapman's *Shadow of Night*<sup>27</sup> clearly sounded the reaction, while Richard Barnfield's *Affectionate Shepherd* of the same year registers with nerveless beauty the full tide of paganism. Barnfield<sup>28</sup> (1574-1627) was a Shropshire lad with enough country background and Oxford training to make him a gourmet in amorous verse. It is the *Venus and Adonis* metre that he uses, and he reproduces the syrupy effect of Shakespeare's stanzas rather charmingly; but there is no real passion in his shepherd Daphnis, and the myth has evaporated in a pleasant wilderness of classical reminiscences, gnomic sayings, and florid garden pictures. For his second poem Barnfield, like Shakespeare, changed to rime royal and moralized more, but he omitted the story entirely, and *The Shepherd's Content*, "or the happiness of a harmless life" is just a plea for *dolce far niente*. In his next two poems, *Cynthia* and *Cassandra* (1595), he retells myths, borrowing the stanza of the former from the *Faerie Queene* and the plot from Peele's *Arraignment of Paris*. It would be wrong to blame his over-lavish borrowings or underrate his charm. He came at an idle moment, and was the idlest poet in it; but he had more worth than such rudderless boats as "J. C.", the author of *Alcilia* (1595), and Anthony Scolaker, the author of *Daiphantus* (1604). He tried to make personal the rich tropical calm that Shakespeare and Marlowe briefly dallied with; but discontent soon found Barnfield also. His two poems of 1598, still in the *Venus and Adonis* stanza, are *The Praise of Money* and *The Complaint of Poetry for the Death of Liberty*.<sup>29</sup>

Richard  
Barnfield

<sup>26</sup> See L. Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae* (1940), pp. 44-51.

<sup>27</sup> See below, Part III, ch. IX.

<sup>28</sup> Barnfield's poems are reprinted in A. H. Bullen, *Some Longer Elizabethan Poems* (1903), pp. 147-270.

<sup>29</sup> Here should be mentioned a mysterious character, William Goddard, who seems to have been a soldier and to have lived for a time in Holland. His *Satirical Dialogue . . . between Alexander the Great and That Truly Woman-hater Diogenes* (ed. J. S. Farmer, 1897) bears no date and claims to have been printed in the Low Countries, but may have been surreptitiously issued in London just after the ban on satire in 1599, to which it makes bitter reference. It is mainly in riming couplets and is largely narrative, Diogenes telling Alexander lewd stories to the discredit of women. The tones of Marlowe and of Marston are curiously intermingled.

Willobie  
his Avis

There is no paganism, and only a tantalizingly vague thread of story in the famous *Willobie his Avis*<sup>30</sup> (1594), which exhibits the successful and argumentative virtue of an innkeeper's wife in the country about Cerne Abbas, Dorset. The prefatory verses contain the first literary tribute to Shakespeare's *Lucrece*,

And Shake-speare paints poor Lucrece' rape;

and it is probable that the "W. S.", who is briefly introduced as an experienced lover and "old player," is the great dramatist.<sup>31</sup> The poem was apparently written by an Oxford student, Henry Willoughby, and it made enough stir through half a dozen editions to indicate that some real scandal may have underlain its now harmless moralizing. Another Oxford student, Peter Coles, or Colse, replied to it in *Penelope's Complaint*<sup>32</sup> (1596), dedicated to Lady Horsey of Dorsetshire. Coles confessed to using "the same style and verse" as *Avis*,—that is, tetrameter sixains grouped in brief snippets of dialogue; but he brought the subject back to the more conventional Greek legend.

Two years later Robert Tofte offered his *Alba*,<sup>33</sup> "the month's mind of a melancholy lover" (1598), in unshortened *Venus and Adonis* verse. It is more reflective than narrative, and like Tofte's more lyrical sequence, *Laura*, of the previous year, does not lack sweetness; but it is remembered now chiefly for its reference to one of Shakespeare's comedies:

Love's Labor's Lost! I once did see a play  
Ycleped so, so called to my pain.

*Alba* resembles Willoughby's *Avis*, in that it seems to rest on amatory experience of which all the contours have been prudentially blurred in the telling. The poet's mistress leaves him in London and withdraws to a village in northwest England, inferentially Warrington on the Mersey. He fills a hundred pages with complaints of his loneliness and her hard heart. Nothing could show plainer how the hot blood of *Hero and Leander* and *Venus and Adonis* had been cooled; yet Tofte found it proper to add a long apology to God ("*Deo optimo, maximo*") in the same metre, which begins:

With tears in eyes, with drops of blood from heart,  
With scalding sighs from inward grieved soul,  
A convertite from vain love now I part,

Goddard's *A Mastiff-whelp*, "imprinted amongst the Antipodes, and are to be sold where they are to be bought" (1599), and his later *Nest of Wasps* (Dort, 1615; ed. C. H. Wilkinson, Oxford, n.d.) illustrate the transition from cynical amatory narrative to the satirical epigram. The *Moriomachia* ("battle against folly," 1613) and *Philosopher's Satires* (1616; re-issued in 1617 as *Vice's Anatomy*) by Robert Anton of Magdalene College, Cambridge, continue the onslaught, but these are definitely Jacobean and rather in the manner of Joseph Hall.

<sup>30</sup> Ed. G. B. Harrison (1926).

<sup>31</sup> See Leslie Hotson, I, *William Shakespeare* (1938), pp. 53-70; T. Brooke, "Willobie's *Avis*," in *Essays in Honor of Albert Feuillerat* (New Haven, 1943), pp. 93-102.

<sup>32</sup> Reprinted by A. B. Grosart, *Occasional Issues*, xi (1880). 159-183.

<sup>33</sup> Reprinted Grosart, *op. cit.*

Whilst for my sins 'fore heaven I do condole.  
I know and 'knowledge I have lived wrong,  
And wilful sought mine own destruction long.

It is his *Hymn of Heavenly Love*.

Drayton's *Endimion and Phoebe*<sup>34</sup> (1595) has great dignity, like all the other work of that admirable man. There is day-dreaming in it, but "proud Momus," from whom he asks in his epilogue to be defended, could have found little to attack, and with *Venus and Adonis* in view would not have been tempted. The theme is that of Keats's *Endymion*, and the metre is the riming couplet which Marlowe had used and Keats was further to romanticize. It is not without profit to compare Drayton's forthright goddess with the high-fantastical deity of the later poet, for two ways of classicizing poetry are clearly distinguished. Impudence, on the other hand, is what marks the last significant mythological poem of the Elizabethan period, John Marston's maiden effort, *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image*<sup>35</sup> (1598). It is in spirit already beyond the period. Marston has no reverence for the myth, or interest in the story save as it permits him some fleshly sketches and witty comments. There had been nothing so Byronic before as the asides of this disillusioned young man over Pygmalion's plight; e.g.,

Drayton,  
*Endimion  
and Phoebe*

Marston,  
*Pygmalion's  
Image*

And, therefore, ladies, think that they ne'er love you,  
Who do not unto more than kissing move you.

Essentially, Marston stands at the end of this tradition and annuls it by exposing it to the strain of merry mockery that had come in with Sir John Harington's translation of *Orlando Furioso* in 1591. A few beginners, to be sure, practised their pens by frank imitations of the elder masters. Thus Thomas Middleton, at the age of about nineteen, admires the long laments of Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, and in *The Ghost of Lucrece*<sup>36</sup> (1600) calls her back to earth in order to provide her with more in the same style. *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus*<sup>37</sup> (1602) is by an imitator of *Hero and Leander*, not impossibly the eighteen-year-old Francis Beaumont. He has admired Marlowe's myth-making propensity and so travesties it that his slight Ovidian plot is nearly lost in a vague *chronique scandaleuse* of the gods. The author is bright and ingenious, but he cannot yet tell a story. William Barksted, who as a boy actor in 1609 performed a part in Jonson's *Epicæne*, issued two years earlier an unpolished tribute to Shakespeare's influence, *Mirrha, the Mother of Adonis* (1607), while a certain H. A. produced a more workmanlike treatment of the same theme in *The Scourge of Venus*<sup>38</sup> (1613). A better poem is *Venus and Anchises (Britain's Ida)*, written by young Phineas Fletcher (1582-1650) in imitation of Spenser.<sup>39</sup> It has an intricate

<sup>34</sup> Ed. Hebel, I, 125-156.

<sup>35</sup> Separately printed, Golden Cockerel Press (1926). See D. Bush, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-180.

<sup>36</sup> Ed. J. Q. Adams (1937).

<sup>37</sup> Ed., *Shakespeare Soc. Papers*, III (1847), 98-126. See D. Bush, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-183.

<sup>38</sup> Both these are edited by A. B. Grosart (1876), as well as Barksted's *Hiren, or The Fair Greek* (1611), which verifies a tale that had had considerable vogue on the stage.

<sup>39</sup> Ed. E. Seaton (1926).

Renaissance stanza and the sense of pure harmony which the Spenserians kept after every one else had given it up.

*Philosophical Poetry*

*Sir John Davies*

As the poetry of sensation reached its mellow maturity in 1593-94 and rapidly waned, there came in a poetry of idea such as had been little in evidence before. Some of the underlying impulse expressed itself in the flood of critical epigrams that filled the later 1590's; some of it prepared the way for the "metaphysicals," and, as illustrated in Raleigh and Chapman, will be discussed in Part III. A very typical *fin de siècle* poet is Sir John Davies<sup>40</sup> (1569-1626), who had one of the best brains of the century and put it to strange tasks. His epigrams, published with Marlowe's translation of Ovid's *Amores*, are as witty and doubtless as coarse as any. From the group of forty-eight one could organize a remarkably detailed account of the way some men lived. His twenty-four *Hymns of Astraea* (1599), all in the same metre and all acrostically spelling "ELISABETHA REGINA," are a triumph of ingenuity, and do not lack either melody or sense. His long poem, *Orchestra*<sup>41</sup> (1594), in rime royal, is a more exhausting *tour de force*. It starts epically with Antinous inviting Queen Penelope to dance, an excuse for the poet to assemble thirty pages of dancing metaphors out of earth and sea and sky, illustrated by a vast amount of learning and casuistry. Davies' *magnum opus* is the truly impressive philosophical poem, *Nosce Teipsum* (1599), in which he argues the nature of the soul (or perhaps the mind) and its immortality through fifty pages of extremely easy and well-phrased quatrains. The subject, it might be thought, is hardly suited either to a professional lawyer or to the trammels of stanzaic verse, but Davies seems little embarrassed by either handicap; and from time to time *Nosce Teipsum* is rediscovered by amateurs who laud it beyond idolatry.

*Daniel's Musophilus*

There was no Elizabethan poet more concerned with the idea of his future fame than Samuel Daniel. He seems to have posterity constantly in view, with a modest assurance; and posterity, if it has not answered his expectations, has been friendly to him. In *Musophilus* (1599) he builds up the case for the literary man to the length of over a thousand lines, against a worldly man, Philocosmus. What he says is noble. Part of it is said by Milton in *Lycidas*; but Milton was not prolix or apologetic.<sup>42</sup>

*Paradise Lost* is sometimes loosely thought of as the last Elizabethan long poem, but it would be more exact to give the title to Drayton's earthier,

<sup>40</sup> See A. H. Bullen, *Some Longer Elizabethan Poems* (1903), pp. 1-122; A. B. Grosart, *Complete Poems of Sir John Davies* (2v, 1876); facsimile ed., C. Howard (1941). See M. D. Holmes, *The Poet as Philosopher* (Philadelphia, 1921).

<sup>41</sup> Ed. E. M. W. Tillyard (1945).

<sup>42</sup> The tendency to replace poetry of action by poetry of reflection is illustrated by two long poems on the deaths of heroic figures: *The Most Honorable Tragedy of Sir Richard Grinville Knight, in ottava rima*, by Gervase Markham, 1595 (reprinted, E. Arber, 1871); and *Sir Francis Drake, his Honorable Life's Commendation and his Tragical Death's Lamentations* by Charles Fitzgeoffrey, 1596. The latter, though its nearly 300 rime royal stanzas are too lush in style, contains the better poetry. (See *The Poems of Charles Fitzgeoffrey*, ed. A. B. Grosart, 1881). Neither contains much narrative or descriptive matter, though the subjects might naturally have invited such treatment.



longer, and more Renaissance *Poly-Olbion*.<sup>43</sup> Even it hardly falls quite within the limits; it was, of course, a long time in writing. The first part was not printed till 1613, and the second part only in 1622; but, as Meres tells us,<sup>44</sup> it was already well started in 1598, and it is but the homelier and fuller carrying out of a plan of Spenser's youth. It is a drowsy, frowsy poem like the *Excursion*, which its admirers never lose their taste for. It runs on in its hexameter couplets almost as endlessly as one of the English brooks that it describes, and bears along a silt of disparate facts such as only a Renaissance mind could assemble. Yet it has a unifying spirit, which is the heroic love of every British natural object, and a simple method, which is that of personification. Here we have the marriage of the Isis and Tame and the Thames and Medway, the orations of the mountains of Wales, the catalogues of famous captains and British brave sea-voyagers. The poem was finished in the seventeenth century, but that century could hardly have conceived it, for it lacked the solidarity of national feeling and the sense of the paganism of nature. In *Poly-Olbion* not only the streams and hills but the highroads have their immanent deities, and there is no faith but one, whose prophetess is the Queen. It is doubtful whether the mythological tendency on its simplest levels has had such large expression since the early Greeks, or whether anything more typically Elizabethan has survived.

<sup>43</sup> In Hebel's edition of Drayton, the entire fourth volume (1933) is devoted to *Poly-Olbion*. See M. Marten, *Drayton's "Poly-Olbion" im Rahmen der englischen Renaissance* (Münster, 1934). The title of the poem means "The Land of Many Blessings," with a pun, of course, on "Albion."

<sup>44</sup> D. C. Allen, *Francis Meres's Treatise "Poetrie,"* (Urbana, 1933), p. 75.

### III

#### Prose Narrative:<sup>1</sup> I. Lyly and His Predecessors

*Jest Books*

When Beatrice is alleged to have had her good wit "out of the Hundred Merry Tales,"<sup>2</sup> it is implied that she depends upon the most archaic source of inspiration an Elizabethan could well have resorted to. The book in question was printed by John Rastell about 1525 as *A C. Mery Talys*, and was followed a decade later by T. Berthelet's *Tales and Quick Answers, Very Mery and Pleasant to Rede*. In its ultimate form, *Merry Tales, Witty Questions, & Quick Answers* (1567), it contained 113 brief selections of a sportive nature, calculated for a pre-Reformation public.<sup>3</sup> Some are mere jests, some classical anecdotes or *exempla* from such authors as Aulus Gellius, and some are rapidly told fabliaux. Several of them reappeared in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*. The majority are well told and really witty, and usually there is a shrewd or surprising moral at the end. The tales of the radish root given to King Louis of France and of the man who paid his debt with crying "baa!"<sup>4</sup> are admirable examples of the short story; and there is merit even in so brief a *jeu d'esprit* as the one "Of the Beggar's answer to Master Skelton the poet":

A poor beggar that was foul, black, and loathly to behold, came, upon a time unto Master Skelton the poet, and asked him his alms. To whom Master Skelton said: I pray thee, get thee away from me, for thou lookest as though thou camest out of hell. The poor man, perceiving he would give him nothing, answered: Forsooth, sir, ye say truth: I came out of hell. Why diddest thou not tarry still there? quod Master Skelton. Marry, sir, quod the beggar, there is no room for such poor beggars as I am; all is kept for such gentlemen as ye be.

William  
Bullein  
(d. 1576)

Here, perhaps, belongs William Bullein's strangely vivid *Dialogue against the Fever Pestilence*<sup>5</sup> (1564-5), which, though in the form of a loosely linked series of dialogues between contemporary type-figures, and full of pungent

<sup>1</sup> *The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare* by J. J. Jusserand (1890) is still an attractive introduction to the subject. E. A. Baker, *The History of the English Novel*, Vol. II: *The Elizabethan Age and After* (1929), may be consulted. For bibliography see A. Esdaile, *A List of English Tales and Prose Romances printed before 1740* (1912). R. Pruvost, *Matteo Bandello and Elizabethan Fiction* (Paris, 1937), contains much information.

<sup>2</sup> *Much Ado about Nothing*, II. i. 137.

<sup>3</sup> See for texts W. C. Hazlitt, *Shakespeare's Jest-Books* (3v, 1864), and for the bibliography, which is complicated, consult F. P. Wilson, "The English Jestbooks of the 16. and early 17. Century," *HLQ*, II (1938), 121-158.

<sup>4</sup> This is from the French farce, *Maitre Pathelin*, or some congener.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. M. W. and A. H. Bullen (1888; *EETSES*, 52). See A. H. Bullen, *Elizabethans* (1924), pp. 155-181. Little is known of Bullein's life. The more technical parts of his *Dialogue* and his earlier books, *The Government of Health* (1558) and *Bulwark of Defence against All Sicknesse*, etc. (1562), show that he stood in the medical tradition of Elyot and Borde (see above, Part I, chs. II and IV).



satire against usurers, doctors, lawyers, Scots, Papists, etc., is largely a collection of tall tales within a framing narrative. A wealthy London citizen and his wife, unable to endure the horrors of the 1564 plague, ride into the country in search of safety, accompanied by their man Roger, who has a great supply of folk tales and fables. Beyond Barnet they dine in an inn adorned with emblematic pictures and hear a certain Mendax tell marvelous stories of Cuba (where the cannibals dwell), of Ethiopia, and other singular countries. Later in their journey a storm overtakes them, and in the storm comes Death, bearing the dart of the pestilence which the old citizen has not escaped. Bullein's book, which is by turns both grim and gay, exotic and acridly realistic, was deservedly popular. By 1578 it had been considerably revised and had gone through three editions.

The influence of the fabliau gave place to that of the erotic *novella* in William Painter's great collection of one hundred and one tales, *The Palace of Pleasure*, published in two volumes, 1566, 1567.<sup>6</sup> Painter (c. 1525-1594), a Kentish schoolmaster advanced by Ambrose, Earl of Warwick to a post in the national service,<sup>7</sup> inscribed his work to that nobleman, whose countess simultaneously received the dedication of Turberville's poems. Painter's dedicatory epistle informs us that his original purpose had been to prepare a collection of classical tales out of Livy. The first stories are of that general character,<sup>8</sup> and perhaps represent the lost book registered in 1562 under the title of "*The City of Civility*, translated into English by William Painter"; but Livy's "majesty" offered difficulties and Painter turned to the more congenial task of introducing Englishmen to the love stories of Boccaccio, Bandello, Queen Margaret of Navarre, and other modern *novellieri*, by whom, as he tells his reader, "The sad shall be discharged of heaviness, the angry and choleric purged, the pleasant maintained in mirth, the whole [i.e. healthy] furnished with disport, and the sick appaised [i.e. relieved] of grief."

Painter, The  
Palace of  
Pleasure

Shakespeare found here the source of *All's Well That Ends Well*, and also, it may be, his first acquaintance with the stories of Lucrece, Coriolanus, Timon of Athens, and Romeo and Juliet. Other dramatists who used this reservoir of plot include Fletcher, Webster, Massinger, Shirley, Thomas Heywood, and, in particular, Marston. Painter's style is good and plain; he has few recondite terms and is mainly concerned to make the reader see the situation; as in this picture of an encouraged lover:

He, that marched not but upon one foot and burned with love, and whose heart leapt for joy and danced for gladness, thought that he had now obtained the top of his felicity and the whole effect of his desire. Suddenly he cast away the despair of his former conceits, objecting [i.e., exposing] himself to the danger wherein

<sup>6</sup> Reprinted (Cresset Press, 4v, 1929) with introduction by Hamish Miles. Ten of the tales are in P. Haworth, *An Elizabethan Story-Book* (1928).

<sup>7</sup> Clerk of the ordnance in the Tower of London. Painter was charged with embezzling public property with the connivance of the Earl, but he continued to hold office till his death.

<sup>8</sup> See D. Bush, "The Classical Tales in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*," *JEGP*, xxiii (1924), 331-341.

he was to be overwhelmed if the lady accepted not his request with good digestion.<sup>9</sup>

Fenton,  
Tragical  
Discourses

In the very year after Painter's first volume appeared with its dedication to the Earl of Warwick, Geoffrey Fenton (c. 1539-1608) issued a similar work with a long dedication to Warwick's sister, the Lady Mary Sidney, mother of Sir Philip. Fenton, who later attained knighthood and considerable notoriety as a political agent in Ireland, was at the time only about twenty-eight. His *Tragical Discourses*<sup>10</sup> (1567) consists of thirteen tales of Bandello, translated through the medium of Boisteau and Belleforest's French.

Fenton is not a very pleasing writer. His sentences are heavy with moral clichés and he has a curious disposition to overuse certain favorite words like *glee*, *humor*, *haunt*, *imp*, and the unanglicized French terms he had picked up in Paris. More even than the other writers of *nouvelle*, he puts long speeches into the mouths of his characters and makes them all speak alike. His choice of tales was praised by the first writer to call critical attention to them, Thomas Warton,<sup>11</sup> who describes his book as "in point of selection and size, perhaps the most capital miscellany of this kind," and indeed they are good tales; but Fenton—aiming perhaps at his patroness, who was a great lady and the particular friend of the Queen—gives them a specialized female interest that goes beyond Bandello and is not pretty. More than Painter, he illustrates the "Italianate" taint which Ascham at just this time was denouncing in the *Schoolmaster*; but the taint, both in the moral and the literary sense, would be less serious if Fenton were franker and more Italian. Belleforest had vitiated Bandello by overlaying his paganism with a moral veneer, and Fenton carries the process further. In his versions of the tales the interpolations and asides on the subject of chastity suggest an unhealthy Puritan obsession and fit very ill with the leering quality of his carnal passages, which are varied and voluptuously illustrated beyond Elizabethan wont. Fenton's style has a good deal of what one finds later in the dramas of Fletcher, the same overwrought morality and fluent emotionalism; as in this speech of Charles Montamin to his sister when demanding of her a more than quixotic sacrifice:

But if your answer put me either in doubt or despair of this means to make even with so true a creditor, assure yourself I will rather abandon both city and country and disclaim the company of all my friends than live amongst you with the name of an unthankful person, or be pointed at of the world not to requite so great a good turn as the delivery and saving of my life.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> No. 41, "A Lady Falsely Accused."

<sup>10</sup> Reprinted in "Broadway Translations" series with introduction by R. L. Douglas. Unpublished diss. (Yale), J. Fellheimer, *Geoffrey Fenton, a Study in Elizabethan Translation* (1941).

<sup>11</sup> *History of English Poetry* (1781).

<sup>12</sup> *Ed. cit.*, p. 95. To this date belongs also the only publication of Edmund Tilney (d. 1610), who as Master of the Revels, 1579-1608, was a man of some importance. His collection is dedicated to the Queen and entitled, *A Brief and Pleasant Discourse of Duties in Marriage, called the Flower of Friendship* (1568). In a luxuriantly described spring the author and M.

George Pettie (c. 1548-1589) was rather more a gentleman and less a *Pettie's* puritan than Fenton. Of his life little is known except that he graduated *Pettie* B. A. from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1570, saw military service abroad, and *Palace* was the great-uncle of the Oxford antiquary, Anthony Wood. For the collection of twelve tales to which his editor gave the punning title, *A Petite Palace of Pettie his Pleasure*<sup>13</sup> (1576), he took many hints from Painter, but he ignored the Italian *novelle* which Fenton had rather garishly exploited. Pettie's graver taste turned in one instance to medieval legend (St. Alexius), and in all the rest to classic myth. He is not, however, a translator, even in the free way his predecessors in the Elizabethan short story had been. He brings his myths out of antiquity and covers them over with the details of sixteenth-century life. Pasiphae is a waiting gentlewoman in King Minos' court with a suitor, Verecundus, who might be any impressionable young friend of Philip Sidney; Pygmalion is a gentleman of Piedmont and doesn't take to sculpture till after three quarters of the tale have recounted his most unclassical disappointment in Platonic love; Cephalus and Procris live in the Duke of Venice's court, and though they suffer the fate the myth assigns, the circumstances are of a very modern kind.

The most interesting thing about Pettie is his manner, which is the most consciously artificial that had yet appeared in English prose. He uses most of the tricks of alliteration, antithesis, and simile from alleged natural history which two years later gave fame to the style of *Euphues*. The resemblance is often so striking as to make it almost certain that Lyly is his imitator; e.g.,

as spices, the more they are beaten, the sweeter scent they send forth; or as the herb camomile, the more it is trodden down, the more it spreadeth abroad; so virtue and honesty, the more it is spited, the more it sprouteth and springeth...<sup>14</sup>

for as the bird caught in the lime, or coney in hay [i.e., net], or deer in toil, the more they strive the faster they stick; so the more diligently she labored to get out of the labyrinth of love, the more doubtfully was she intricated therein.<sup>15</sup>

Ah, the bravery of these fine girls! the more they are courted, the more they are coy; the more humbly they are sued unto, the more loftily they look. And if a man practise them in the way of marriage, good God, what show of shame-

Pedro di Juxan walk in fields till noon, then dine at Lady Julia's house, where they meet Lodovico Vives "and an old gentleman called M. Erasmus." After talk of Boccaccio and County Baltizer (Castiglione) they go into a flowery arbor, where Pedro discourses to them of the nine "herbs" or requisites of a husband in guiding his married life. A continuation deals with "The office or duty of the married woman."

<sup>13</sup> Ed. H. Hartman (1938). See M. P. Tilley, *Elizabethan Proverb Lore in Lyly's "Euphues" and in Pettie's "Petite Palace" with Parallels from Shakespeare* (1926); D. Bush, "Pettie's Petty Pilfering from Poets," *PQ*, v (1926). 325-329; "The Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure," *JEGP*, xxvii (1928). 162-169; C. J. Vincent, "Pettie and Greene," *MLN*, liv (1939). 105-111; J. Swart, "Lyly and Pettie," *English Studies*, xxiii (1941). 910-918.

<sup>14</sup> *Ed. cit.*, p. 29; compare *Euphues*, ed. Bond, p. 191.16 and 196.3, and Shakespeare, *I Henry IV*, ii. iv. 447 ff.

<sup>15</sup> *Ed. cit.*, p. 75.

fastness will they make, what visors of virginity will they put on, what colors of continency will they set forth, what chariness will they make of their chastity!<sup>16</sup>

Grange and  
Melbancke

John Grange's only recorded work is a novelistic *novella*, *The Golden Aphroditis*<sup>17</sup> (1577), which fills the brief interval between the *Petite Palace* and *Euphues* with an almost biological symmetry and further illustrates the fact that Lyly was more expressive of a movement than of an individual taste. Like Pettie, Grange handles a mythological tale in very modern fashion, but like Lyly he invents his slight plot, which concerns the successful suit of a certain Sir N. O. for the Lady A. O. (Alpha Omega), who is no less than the daughter of the goddess Diana and Endymion. The narrative is interspersed with songs in the manner Greene and Lodge made popular, and the prose is encrusted with proverbial, lapidary, pseudo-classical ornaments borrowed from the borrowers of Pliny and Erasmus.<sup>18</sup> Still more characteristic of the taste for extraneous and plundered adornment is another obscure one-book novelist, Brian Melbancke, whose *Philotimus* (1583) follows *Euphues* in date, but gets its plot mainly from the first story in Pettie's collection and its style from practically any contemporary book that came Melbancke's way.<sup>19</sup>

Gascoigne,  
Adventures  
of F. J.

The most interesting piece of Elizabethan prose fiction, when viewed as a remote ancestor of the novels of Richardson and Meredith, is the lively sketch of English country-house life by George Gascoigne, which was published in 1573 as *The Adventures of Master F. J.* Though it may owe a little to Pope Pius II's *History of Lucrece and Eurialus*,<sup>20</sup> which had appeared thrice in English translation between 1550 and 1567, it has no similarity to the tales of Painter, Fenton, or Pettie. Where the *novella* usually offers sensational incident and slender characterization, Gascoigne does the reverse. He depicts to the length of 25,000 words the emotions and day-by-day lives of a group of idle gentlefolk in a great house in northern England. There are no exciting or melancholy events. The hero, a guest in the house, fails to reciprocate the affection of the charming daughter of his host, Frances, and instead engages in a clandestine affair with Elinor, the daughter-in-law. When Elinor jilts him for another lover, F. J. quietly takes his leave; Frances remains unwed, virgin, and not too downcast; and Elinor goes on with her

<sup>16</sup> *Ed. cit.*, p. 170. Two slightly later collections of tales are of importance as sources of plays: Henry Wotton's *Courly Controversy of Cupid's Cautels* (1578), containing five stories translated from French; and Whetstone's *Heptameron of Civil Discourses* (1582).

<sup>17</sup> Reprinted (1939) in *Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints*. The volume contains also *Grange's Garden*, a collection of short pieces in verse and prose.

<sup>18</sup> See P. W. Long, "From *Troilus* to *Euphues*," in *Kittredge Anniversary Papers* (1913), pp. 367-376; H. E. Rollins, "John Grange's *The Golden Aphroditis*," *Harvard Studies & Notes in Phil. & Lit.*, xvi (1934), 177-198. Two somewhat similar prose tales with metrical inserts are found in Whetstone's *Rock of Regard* (1576): "Rinaldo and Giletta" and "The Orchard of Repentance." The former is a complex story of lovers brought into temporary distress by a villain's wiles; the latter has the appearance of being autobiographical.

<sup>19</sup> See H. E. Rollins, "Notes on Brian Melbancke's *Philotimus*," *SP*, extra series, 1 (1929), 40-57; "Notes on the Sources of Melbancke's *Philotimus*," *Harvard Studies & Notes in Phil. & Lit.*, xviii (1935), 177-198; "Thomas Deloney and Brian Melbancke," *ibid.*, xix (1936), 219-229; M. P. Tilley, "Further Borrowings from Poems in *Philotimus*," *SP*, xxvii (1929), 186-204; D. C. Allen, "Melbancke and Gosson," *MLN*, LIV (1939), 111-114.

<sup>20</sup> Reprinted (*Roxburghe Club*, 1873) with John Partridge's *History of Placidus*.

philanderings. Besides the three chief characters certain others are presented with a good deal of distinctness, and the ordinary occupations of such a group are realistically depicted: games, dancing, tale-telling and verse-making, walks and rides in the park, and sociable little gatherings in bedrooms when some one is indisposed. It has the air of being drawn from life; but when Gascoigne published it under his own name in 1575, he took a number of self-protective steps, adding an apologetic epistle to "the reverend divines" who had suspected scandal in it, changing the scene to Italy, and excising the more immoral passages. The effect was to close a door which had for the nonce been very invitingly opened.<sup>21</sup>

John Lyly<sup>22</sup> (1554-1606) took fewer risks three years later in the first part of his *Euphues* (1578). Grandson of the famous grammarian, Lyly had been well bred in Kent and carefully educated at Oxford. He was one of the most exquisite persons of his age, and if a hint in the autobiography of his fellow collegian, Simon Forman, has been properly interpreted,<sup>23</sup> the slender narrative plot of *Euphues* is based upon what actually happened between the author, the mayor's daughter of Brackley near Oxford, and John Thornborough during Lyly's college days; but this was never admitted in the novel, which from the first set the story in Italy. Nothing could be much simpler than this tale. Euphues, a foppish Athenian, goes to Naples to lead a life of pleasure and there forms an intimate friendship with another young man, Philautus, who introduces him to his fiancée, Lucilla, daughter of "one of the chief governors of the city." Euphues deceitfully alienates Lucilla's affections, whereupon he and Philautus exchange taunting letters; but when the fickle Lucilla discards Euphues for a third suitor, they decide to be friends again, and Euphues returns to Athens. There is far less human interest or graphic detail than in Gascoigne's story, which is of nearly the same length; and Lyly is staggeringly moral: nothing in the least risqué occurs.

John Lyly

Euphues:  
The Anatomy of Wit

The book is sub-titled *The Anatomy of Wit* and makes it appeal to the intelligence rather than the emotions or even the conscience. The narrative is but half the work and is followed by a long epistolary essay against love, called "a cooling card for Philautus and all fond lovers"; a paraphrase of Plutarch's tract on the education of children, which Sir Thomas Elyot had translated long before (here called "Euphues and his Ephebus"); a controversial dialogue between Euphues and an easily converted atheist; and

<sup>21</sup> See L. Bradner, "The First English Novel: A Study of George Gascoigne's *Adventures of Master F. J.*," *PMLA*, XLV (1930), 543-552; also P. W. Long, "From *Troilus* to *Euphues*," cited in note 18 above.

<sup>22</sup> R. W. Bond, *Complete Works of John Lyly* (3v, Oxford, 1902); A. Feuillerat, *John Lyly: Contribution à l'histoire de la renaissance en Angleterre* (Cambridge, 1910); S. A. Tannenbaum, *John Lyly, a Concise Bibliography* (1940). The separate edition of *Euphues* by M. W. Croll and H. Clemens (1916) is very useful. Rose Macaulay has a pleasant essay on "Lyly and Sidney" in D. Verschoyle, *The English Novelists* (1936), pp. 33-50. The Euphuistic style, discussed in the works of Bond, Feuillerat, and Croll just cited, is carefully analyzed by C. G. Child, *John Lyly and Euphuism* (Munich, 1894). For a recent interesting theory of its origin see W. Ringler, "The Immediate Source of Euphuism," *PMLA*, LIII (1938), 678-686, and Ringler's introduction to John Rainolds, *Oratio in Laudem Artis Poeticae* (Princeton, 1940). For further discussion of Lyly and his style, see below, ch. VI.

<sup>23</sup> See Feuillerat, *op. cit.*, pp. 274 f.

finally, a set of rhetorical letters "writ by Euphues to his friends." It is a strange amalgam of mercurial wit and very heavy metal. That it was phenomenally popular every one knows; that it could have been is evidence that England in Lyly's time was still far more moved by the humanistic ideals that Ascham stood for than by those of the new Italian school he condemned. Verbal ingenuity, sententiousness, and weighty learning lightly handled were what most appealed to a society painfully conscious of its cultural limitations; and no one quite equalled Lyly in these respects till Bacon, or perhaps till Addison, wrote their essays.<sup>24</sup>

The second part, called *Euphues and His England* (1580), has a little more coherence and a still more artful style. Euphues and Philautus embark at Naples, and after eight weeks land at Dover. They visit Canterbury and, traveling Londonwards, pause at the country house of an old man, Fidus, who tells them something of the glory of the Queen and illustrates the laws of monarchy by the domestic economy of his honey bees, as later the Archbishop of Canterbury does in Shakespeare's *Henry V*. He also relates the story of his sad and chaste love for Iffida. Thus adjusted to the moral climate of the island, the visitors reach London and the court, "in the which Euphues took such delight that he accounted all the praises he heard of it before rather to be envious than otherwise, and to be partial in not giving so much as it deserved, and yet to be pardoned because they could not." The impressionable Philautus is devastated by his first sight of an English maid of honor, Camilla, whose chaste perfections strain the utmost powers of Lyly's rhetoric:

... oftentimes delighted to hear discourses of love, but ever desirous to be instructed in learning; somewhat curious to keep her beauty, which made her comely, but more careful to increase her credit, which made her commendable: not adding the length of a hair to courtliness that might detract the breadth of a hair from chastity; in all her talk so pleasant, in all her looks so amiable, so grave modesty joined with so witty mirth, that they that were entangled with her beauty were enforced to prefer her wit before their wills, and they that loved her virtue were compelled to prefer their affections before her wisdom. Whose rare qualities caused so strange events, that the wise were allured to vanity and the wantons to virtue: much like the river in Arabia, which turneth gold to dross and dirt to silver.

After an intolerable amount of soliloquizing, the lovesick wretch betrays his infatuation to Euphues, who, for reasons not clear to a modern reader, rebukes him as savagely as if he were a backsliding Trappist monk; and to Camilla, whose response is unkind in the extreme:

I never looked for a better tale of so ill a face; you say a bad color may make a good countenance, but he that conferreth your disordered discourse with your deformed attire may rightly say that he never saw so crabbed a visage, nor heard so crooked a vein.

<sup>24</sup> The immediate popularity of the first part of *Euphues* is illustrated by the rapid appearance of a narrative constructed on the same principle and in imitative style, Stephen Gosson's *Ephemerides* (i.e., Diary) of *Phialo*, which was entered on the Stationers' Register Nov. 7, 1579, and published the same year.



The moral seems to be, to put it mildly, that lovemaking is frowned upon at Queen Elizabeth's court. More soliloquy leads to a visit to Psellus the sorcerer, which brings the distraught lover nothing but seven pages of curious classical lore about herbs and minerals. He therefore writes an ultra-Euphuistic letter, which he delivers, hidden in a pomegranate, on an occasion when Camilla "suddenly complained of an old disease wherewith she many times felt herself grieved, which was an extreme heat in the stomach." The delicate Camilla replies with written discouragement, "stitched into an Italian Petrarch" and delivered by hand at the next social gathering. More letters offer more samples of epistolary grace and are exchanged at delightfully described parties, but Philautus makes no progress in his love. Camilla prefers an English suitor, the noble Surius, and at last, by the advice of the incomparable Euphues and the help of the wise lady Flavia, her Italian worshipper is induced to fix his affections upon a less unattainable object. This result is expedited by a supper party that Flavia gives, at which the guests exhibit, for a prize, their best specimens of courtly discourse. The subject is, of course, love, and the opinions mainly Platonic.

There seems to be no reason why Euphues should ever cease to depict the stately charms of the Elizabethan court, but arbitrarily "serious and weighty affairs of his own," hitherto quite unsuspected, require his return to Athens, "out of England," as he says, "a place in my opinion (if any such may be in the earth) not inferior to a Paradise." For the improvement of the ladies and gentlewomen of Italy he writes what he calls "Euphues' glass for Europe," which in the beginning is a paraphrase of William Harrison's recent description of England,<sup>25</sup> and in the last fifteen pages a portrait of Queen Elizabeth, probably the most elaborately flattering that that much flattered sovereign ever received.

In addition to all the stylistic charms of the *Anatomy of Wit, Euphues and His England* had two allurements that the fashionable public of the day found irresistible. In the first place, it was all transparently about themselves, the scene being London, the characters the highest circle of society, and the time (as numerous dates and allusions reminded them) the very year in which the volume appeared. And, in the second place, Lyly was most careful to depict them, not as they were, but as they would have liked to have themselves regarded. They would have spoken and behaved somewhat like the people in his pages, if they had been infinitely cleverer and a great deal more righteous than they were. It was only much later that the level-headed Drayton found courage to assert that Lyly taught the English to speak and write "all like mere lunatics."<sup>26</sup> Edward Blount's preface to Lyly's *Six Court Comedies* (1632), in a time when under Queen Henrietta Maria all the English court was French, illustrates the influence of *Euphues* with a striking figure:

<sup>25</sup> Published with Holinshed's Chronicle (1577).

<sup>26</sup> To Henry Reynolds, "Of Poets and Poesy" (1627).



Our nation are in his debt for a new English which he taught them. *Euphues and his England* began first that language. All our ladies were then his scholars, and that beauty in court which could not parley Euphuism was as little regarded as she which now there speaks not French.

*Euphues* was silly, but it stood soundly in the moral tradition of Lyly's humanist grandfather, William Lyly the grammarian, and Charles Kingsley's nineteenth-century tribute, though surprising, is in no way undeserved: "as brave, righteous, and pious a book as a man need look into." If Queen Elizabeth's maids of honor, who gave their days and nights to the volumes of Lyly, had emulated the conduct of his characters as assiduously as they strove to imitate his language, the social chronicles of that time would have made far tamer reading.

## IV

### Prose Narrative: II. Greene and His Followers

In the twentieth century Robert Greene<sup>1</sup> (1560-1592) could hardly have escaped becoming a journalist. He had in remarkable degree the "nose for news," the untiring pen, the ability to give the public just what the public wanted. He was the literary chameleon of his age, imitating, often superficially but usually with a certain added charm, anything that his contemporaries had successfully created. There is no more typical Elizabethan than Greene, brought up as he was at Norwich rather poorly and rather puritanically, educated at Cambridge rather broadly than deeply, seasoned by Italian travel, and experienced, on the one hand, in all the squalors of lowest London and, on the other (as his dedications show), in all the arts of social blandishment. These things, plus endless energy and a personal attractiveness that still reflects itself in what he wrote, made him a man of the first note, though as an author he seldom rose above the second rank.

*Greene's  
Personality*

It was impossible for such a man to ignore the popularity of *Euphues*, or fail to see how the formula could be improved by increasing the love interest and accelerating the narrative. So, in the ten years that followed the publication of Lyly's *Euphues and His England*, Greene turned out a score of little novels, seldom much over a hundred pages in length, which have a great outward variety and a great fundamental sameness. The first part of *Mamillia*, "a mirror or looking-glass for the ladies of England" (entered on the Stationers' Register in October, 1580), tells how Mamillia, daughter of the Duke of Padua, has a virtuous admirer, Florion, and a wily pursuer, Pharicles. Her father proposes to marry her to Pharicles, who, however, is smitten by the beauty of Mamillia's cousin, Publia, and decides to pretend love to both girls, being "a perfect pattern of lovers in these our days." He allows himself to be formally affianced to Mamillia, but exchanges love letters with Publia. When Mamillia hears of his dissembling, he decamps for Sicily. In the second part (entered, 1583) Pharicles has become the friend of Fer-ragus, son of the governor of "Saragossa," capital of Sicily. He rebuffs Clarinda, a proud and wealthy courtesan, who denounces him as a spy, and he is about to be executed when Mamillia arrives, discloses Clarinda's duplicity, and marries him. In the meantime Publia has entered a nunnery and

*Greene's  
Euphuistic  
Romances*

<sup>1</sup> See A. B. Grosart, *Life and Complete Works of Robert Greene* (15v, 1881-6); R. Pruvost, *Robert Greene et ses romans* (Paris, 1938); S. A. Tannenbaum, *Robert Greene, a Concise Bibliography* (1939). A number of the pamphlets by Greene and relating to him are conveniently available in the "Bodley Head Quartos" (1923-4). The novelized life of Greene, *Garland of Bays*, by Gwyn Jones (1938) is of interest and value.

left her fortune to Pharicles. The worthy Florion has been quite forgotten, and so have the author's doubts concerning Pharicles.

Arbasto

*The Mirror of Modesty* (1584), dedicated to the Countess of Derby, is the story of Susanna, told with a lack of artifice for which Greene apologizes; but *Gwydonius*, or *The Card of Fancy* (i.e., chart of love), published in the same year and dedicated to the Earl of Oxford, is one of Greene's most elaborate fictions. *Morando, the Tritameron* (i.e., three days) of *Love*, dedicated to the Earl of Arundel, is like *Mamillia* in two parts (1584, 1587), and lays more stress upon the Renaissance taste for philosophic debate. The influence of Castiglione is clear. *Arbasto, the Anatomy of Fortune* (1584) sets the romantic tale within a melancholy frame. The undescribed narrator, visiting Sidon, sees in a hermitage an old archflamen (priest) "pouring forth streams of waterish tears," who plays a "dump" about fortune and then tells his story. He was once Arbasto, King of Denmark, who, while warring against the French king, fell in love with the latter's daughter, Doralicia. She scorned him, but her sister Myrania became enamoured, released him from prison, fled with him to Denmark, and died of a broken heart when she discovered his indifference. Doralicia then repents and offers love, but is rebuffed and she too dies, whereupon Arbasto's subjects revolt and banish him, and he finds content in his hermit's cell.

In *Planetomachia*, dedicated to the Earl of Leicester (1585), the frame is a quarrelsome discussion between the seven Ptolemaic "planets." Venus relates a tragedy, not unlike *Romeo and Juliet*, of two lovers in Ferrara, who are destroyed by the saturnine malignity of the lady's father; and Saturn retorts with a tale of Venus's balefulness. A Homeric theme is developed in *Penelope's Web* (1587), dedicated to the sister countesses of Cumberland and Warwick; and another Homeric subject inspires a balancing romance of the same year, *Euphues his Censure to Philautus* (1587), which is dedicated to the Earl of Essex and "aimeth at the exquisite portraiture of a perfect martialist." The title of this novel has no appropriateness, unless to avow Greene's continued discipleship to Lyly, from whose method he was in fact steadily departing. In *Alcida*, or *Greene's Metamorphosis*, registered in December, 1588, Ovid is the remote model, and the narrator is shipwrecked on the island of Taprobane (Ceylon) in the Antarctic seas. In *Perimedes the Blacksmith* (1588) the poor smith and his wife Delia (who were probably borrowed by Peele for his *Old Wives' Tale*) dwell in Memphis, respected by the Egyptians for their industry and contentment. Conjugal discourse on the blessings of humble life leads to tales of very romantic quality, from which one would infer that Greene had been reading Ariosto and the *novelle*.

Pandosto

Greene's *Pandosto, the Triumph of Time* (1588) provided Shakespeare with the plot of *The Winter's Tale*, though offering no hint for Autolycus or for the statue scene. It was the most popular of all these romances and remained in common circulation for centuries, in the later editions under the alternative title of *Dorastus and Fawnia*. It is marked by better narrative,

shorter soliloquies, and less Euphuism than its predecessors. A certain similarity of plot is found in Greene's *Philomela*, which, though not printed till 1592, had been written earlier. The tale resembles also the "curious impertinent" story of Cervantes,<sup>2</sup> but the handling is less realistic and less bleak than the Spaniard was to give it. It deals with an incredibly chaste, maligned, and ultimately vindicated countess, and contains several of the most charming of Greene's occasional songs. *Menaphon*, *Camilla's Alarum to Sleeping Euphues*, which appeared in 1589, has nothing to say of Euphues or Camilla, but is distinguished by a long prefatory essay of Thomas Nashe upon the state of contemporary literature,<sup>3</sup> less intelligible now than might be desired, but of considerable importance, as are also Greene's briefer slurs on the *Tamburlaine* type of drama in his own preface to *Perimedes*. *Menaphon*, like *Pandosto* before it, shows that Greene has come under the influence, if not of Sidney's yet unprinted *Arcadia*<sup>4</sup> (which is most likely), certainly of the Greek romances from which the *Arcadia* drew. The scene of *Menaphon* is *Arcadia*, and its plot, like those of *Pandosto* and *Arcadia*, concerns the working out of a riddling oracle. Pirates, shepherds, disguised royal personages, a Sohrab-and-Rustum combat of father and son, the siege of a castle, Mediterranean voyages, and most complicated lovemaking give this entertaining piece much more the flavor of Sidney than of Lyly. It contains also fourteen of the lyrics with which Greene had learned, with no precedent from Lyly, to idealize his novels.<sup>5</sup>

*Menaphon*

Perhaps the last, and perhaps the best, of Greene's Euphuistic romances is *Ciceronis Amor*, or *Tully's Love*, published in 1589, with a dedication to Ferdinando Lord Strange, and eight times reprinted in the next half century. Terentia, daughter of the consul Flaminius, has a heart which Cupid allegedly cannot pierce, though the patrician warrior Lentulus pines for her love. At a dinner at the consul's house, where the poet Archias discourses of jealousy, and verse, both English and Latin, is recited, Lentulus unavailingly addresses Terentia, who finds herself strongly attracted to his low-born friend, the young orator Cicero, while her companion, Flavia, becomes infatuated with Lentulus. Lentulus pines and grows sick. One day Terentia, Flavia, and Cornelia walk to Arpinatum "to take the air." They meet Cicero, whose talk further inflames Terentia's love; then they hear an old shepherd's tale of Coridon and Phyllis, and listen to his pretty ode, "Walking in a Valley Green." The girls fall asleep under a tree, and the loutish Fabius, on sight of the sleeping Terentia, feels the refining touch of love, as in the tale Boccaccio tells, and after him Dryden, of Cymon and Iphigenia. In a scene more suggestive of the courtship of Miles Standish, Cicero pleads with Terentia for Lentulus. Fabius, to forward his suit, puts himself at the head of a band of rioters; Cicero saves the situation by an oration before the senate, and is

*Tully's Love*

<sup>2</sup> *Don Quixote*, Part I, ch. 33-35 (1605).

<sup>3</sup> See M. Knapp, "A Note on Nashe's Preface to Greene's *Menaphon*," *N&Q*, CLXIV (1933), 98; V. Osterberg and J. D. Wilson, "Nashe's 'Kid in Æsop,'" *RES*, XVIII (1942), 385-394.

<sup>4</sup> For discussion of Sidney's *Arcadia* see ch. VIII, below.

<sup>5</sup> Greene's songs are discussed by Alice Meynell in an essay, "Strictly an Elizabethan Lyrist," in *The Second Person Singular* (1922).

Greene's  
Tricks of  
Style

rewarded with Terentia's hand, while Lentulus marries Flavia and Fabius Cornelia.<sup>6</sup>

Greene's discipleship to Lyly was never very earnest. In the earlier romances he applies Euphuism with a trowel; but his nature lore, instead of being grubbed out of Pliny, must often have been improvised with tongue in cheek; e.g.,

As he which is wounded of the porcuntine can never be healed unless his wounds be washed with the blood of the same beast; as there is nothing better against the stinging of a snake then to be rubbed with an adder's slough . . . For it is impossible, Valericus, to call the falcon to the lure wherein the pens [i.e., feathers!] of a chameleon are pricked, because she doth deadly detest them; it is hard to train the lion to that trap which savoreth of diagredium [i.e., scammony, a purgative drug], because he loatheth it . . .<sup>7</sup>

or

the violets in America, which in summer yield an odoriferous smell and in winter a most pestilent savor;<sup>8</sup>

and his perversions of classical story are often surprising in one who was master of arts in both the universities. In *Euphues his Censure* Iphigenia is in the Greek camp at Troy, placidly acting as hostess for her father, and in *Mamillia* the reader is asked, what man

offered to die for his wife as *Admeta* did for her husband *Alcest*? What man ever swallowed burning coals as *Portia* did for *Cato*?<sup>9</sup>

He was amusingly unscrupulous in eking out a later novel with pages stolen from an earlier one.<sup>10</sup> Other faults could be mentioned; but they would not alter the fact that these books, which went through approximately seventy-five editions before 1640 and (as the dedications and commendatory verses show) appealed to the great as well as the obscure, are readable still. Beginning with style, Greene came to depend more upon the inserted *novella* and lyric, and at last, as in *Pandosto*, *Menaphon*, and *Tully's Love*, upon complexity of story.

That Greene was really ashamed of his romantic tales, as he professed to be, is hardly credible. More unsullied pages are not to be found in any library of love literature, and no critic has disputed the justice of R. B.'s tribute to him in *Greene's Funerals* (1594),<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> An anonymous play, *Every Woman in Her Humor* (1609) follows the plot of this romance. The plot of *Menaphon* is the foundation of another play, *The Thracian Wonder* (1661), ascribed to Webster and Rowley; and the plot of *Philomela* of Davenport's *City Nightcap*.

<sup>7</sup> *Gwydonius*, ed. Grosart, p. 51 f. See D. C. Allen, "Science and Invention in Greene's Prose," *PMLA*, LIII (1938), 1007-1018.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> *Mamillia*, Part II, p. 157.

<sup>10</sup> See C. J. Vincent, "Further Repetitions in the Works of Robert Greene," *PQ*, XVIII (1939), 73-77, and articles there cited.

<sup>11</sup> Reprinted, R. B. McKerrow (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1922). See C. Crawford, "Greene's Funerals, 1594, and Nicholas Breton," *SP*, extra ser. I (1929), 1-39.

His gadding muse, although it ran of love,  
Yet did he sweetly moralize his songs;  
Ne ever gave the looser cause to laugh,  
Ne men of judgment for to be offended.

But it is easy to understand that Greene was sick of Euphuistic unreality. The jaundiced eye with which he now regarded the literature of escape helped him to see the possibilities of its converse, the literature of sociological realism. As usual, he went with his public, and he was one of the first to exploit in popular writing the social unrest that followed the heroic effort of the Armada years.

*Greene's  
Turn to  
Realism*

A quarter-century before, a country gentleman, Thomas Harman, had published his extraordinary report of the underworld characters he had examined in Kent: *A Caveat or Warning for Common Cursitors, Vulgarly Called Vagabones* (1566); and a well-written dialogue, *A Manifest Detection of Dice-play and Other Practices* (c. 1552), had dealt excellently with the London scene.<sup>12</sup> But Greene's pamphlets were particularly well timed, for the criminal class of London had just been greatly increased by the disbanded soldiers turned adrift after the Drake and Norris expedition of 1589.<sup>13</sup> The first one appeared, and went through three editions,<sup>14</sup> in 1591: *A Notable Discovery of Cozenage Now Daily Practised by Sundry Lewd Persons Called Cony-Catchers and Crossbiters*. It is dedicated "to the young gentlemen, merchants, apprentices, farmers, and plain countrymen," and warns them of the tricks of card-sharpers and swindlers with women. Greene, with his reporter's eye and Bohemian acquaintance, was well equipped for such work, which he makes always vivid, often comic, and sometimes pathetically moving, as in this picture of the fleeced "cony":

*Harman's  
Caveat*

*Greene's  
Cony-  
Catching  
Pamphlets*

Then the barnacle's card comes forth, and strikes such a cold humor unto his heart, that he sits as a man in a trance, not knowing what to do, and sighing while his heart is ready to break, thinking on the money that he hath lost. Perhaps the man is very simple and patient and, whatsoever he thinks, for fear goes his way quiet with his loss, while the cony-catchers laugh and divide the spoil; and being out of the doors, poor man, goes to his lodging with a heavy heart, pensive and sorrowful; but too late, for perhaps his state did depend on that money, and so he, his wife, his children, and his family are brought to extreme misery. . . .

The *Second* and the *Third Part of Cony-Catching* both followed in 1592. One exposes five other kinds of deceit, illustrated by instances that had recently occurred; the other consists of ten picaresque tales, professedly based on notes given to Greene by an elderly justice of the peace. This last year of Greene's life was one of furious industry; it produced three more

<sup>12</sup> Both are reprinted, with Greene's cony-catching pamphlets and related material, by A. V. Judges, *The Elizabethan Underworld* (1930). See F. Aydelotte, *Elizabethan Rogues and Vagabonds* (Oxford, 1913).

<sup>13</sup> See Judges, *op. cit.*, pp. xvii f.

<sup>14</sup> R. Pruvost, *LTLS*, Oct. 6, 1932, p. 716, and the same writer's *Greene et ses romans*, p. 422.

A Quip for  
an Upstart  
Courtier

pamphlets of this nature. *A Disputation between a He-Cony-Catcher and a She-Cony-Catcher* begins with the debate between Laurence and Nan, leading practitioners of the two professions, and adds *The Conversion of an English Courtesan*, a brief novel related in the first person, which may be regarded as forecasting Defoe's *Moll Flanders*. *The Black Book's Messenger* is a set of stories of the life and death of Ned Browne, "one of the most notable cutpurses, crossbiters, and cony-catchers that ever lived in England." The *Black Book* itself, which was to be a Who's Who of the cony-catching world, Greene did not apparently live to complete; but he produced a more imaginative book, which is one of his best and may be regarded as his final word of social criticism, *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, "or a quaint dispute between Velvet-breeches and Cloth-breeches, wherein is plainly set down the disorders in all estates and trades." It is April in London, the last April of Greene's life. In Chaucerian mood he goes into the fields, falls asleep, and has a fantastic vision in which he sees a monstrous headless creature in velvet breeches striding to meet a similar apparition in cloth breeches. Each is armed, and they are about to fight for their right to "frank tenement" in England, when the author proposes trial of their claims by jury. A great number of type figures now pass, from whom, after discussion of the civic qualities of each, a jury of twenty-four is made up. The foreman is a knight; the last member chosen a poet, described as in one of the Jacobean character books:

a certain kind of an overworn gentleman, attired in velvet and satin, but it was somewhat dropped and greasy, and boots on his legs, whose soles waxed thin and seemed to complain of their master, which, treading thrift under his feet, had brought them unto that consumption. He walked not as other men, in the common beaten way, but came compassing *circum circa*, as if we had been devils and he would draw a circle about us, and at every third step he looked back as if he were afraid of a baily or a sergeant.

After due deliberation the knight pronounces the jury's verdict in favor of Cloth-breeches and old fashioned simplicity.

Greene's  
Autobio-  
graphical  
Pamphlets

Greene's revulsion from tales of love, which was doubtless aesthetic, though he interpreted it as moral, made itself apparent even before he found an escape in the cony-catching series. It synchronizes with the booksellers' discovery, about 1588, of the mercantile worth of his name in a title. *Greene's Orpharion*, of uncertain date, 1588-1590, represents the narrator, who has "found love to be a labyrinth, a fury, a hell," as visiting all the shrines of Venus in search of relief. Finally, Mercury, disguised as a shepherd, shows him a vision in which Orpheus and Arion (hence the title) tell contrasted tales of the cruelty and nobility of love. The moral is that women have both vanities and virtues, but the vision cures Greene of his infatuation, and the last words are: "I was overtaken with repentance." It is not to question his sincerity to say that he recognized the news value of his own personality, and from this time used the pattern of his life as stiffening for his stories. He dedicates *Greene's Mourning Garment* (1590) to the Earl of Cumberland



as presenting "the reformation of a second Ovid," and in the conclusion calls it "the first fruits of my new labors and the last farewell to my fond desires." It is a version of the parable of the prodigal son, reflecting Greene's dissoluteness and repentance in the adventures of young Philador of Callipolis.

*Greene's Farewell to Folly* (1591), "sent to courtiers and scholars as a precedent to warn them from the vain delights that draw youth on to repentance," is a discourse of Florentine ladies and gentlemen, who withdraw to a farm and tell moral tales illustrating three kinds of folly: pride, lust, and drunkenness. The fictional interest is greater and the autobiographical hints more concrete in *Greene's Never Too Late* and its sequel, *Francesco's Fortunes* (1590), of which there were eight editions by the end of 1631. Within one of Greene's pleasant Italian frames it paints the portrait of Francesco, a young Englishman, and his chaste wife Isabel. They elope and after many hardships are pardoned by Isabel's father, a wealthy country gentleman. All then goes well till business takes Francesco to London (Troynovant), where he is seduced and ruined by the loathsome Infida, it being pointed out that "our courtesans of Troynovant are far superior in artificial allurements to them of all the world." By luck the destitute Francesco

fell in amongst a company of players, who persuaded him to try his wit in writing of comedies, tragedies, or pastorals, and if he could perform anything worth the stage, then they would largely reward him for his pains. *Greene and the Players*

So Francesco,

getting him home to his chamber, writ a comedy which so generally pleased all the audience, that happy were those actors in short time that could get any of his works, he grew so exquisite in that faculty.

A discourse on plays, playmakers, and players is here interjected, after which we learn of Isabel's persecutions in the country, ended, in some delightful pages of wishful thinking, when the successful and repentant Francesco returns and is forgiven.

The story is told more bleakly in the death-bed pamphlet called *Greene's Groatworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance*<sup>15</sup> (1592). Here the author is Roberto, a disinherited younger son, "a scholar, and married to a proper gentlewoman." The courtesan Lamilia beguiles him and causes him to be cast out of his brother's house; but again he meets an actor, by whose providential advice he becomes *Greene's Groatworth of Wit*

famous for an arch-playmaking poet; his purse like the sea some time swelled, anon like the same sea fell to a low ebb: yet seldom he wanted, his labors were so well esteemed.

He leads the dissolute life with which Greene is charged, and this time resists the efforts of his wife to "recall" him. Then Greene becomes frankly autobiographical and ends with the well-known letter to his "fellow scholars about

<sup>15</sup> See H. Jenkins, "On the Authenticity of *Greene's Groatworth of Wit* and *The Repentance of Robert Greene*," *RES*, xi (1935). 28-41.

this city" in which he warns them of "Shake-scene," and with a poignant but evidently retouched letter to his wife, "found with this book after his death." This last letter, in a more authentic version, is printed also in *The Repentance of Robert Greene* (1592), which opens with an earnest avowal of sin that has been compared to Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, and proceeds to give some facts of his disordered life in a setting that makes it hard to believe in his moral ruin.<sup>16</sup>

Greene's  
Vision

One more posthumous pamphlet, *Greene's Vision*, "written at the instant of his death," as the title-page claims, must have been composed several years earlier, about the time of *Orpharion*. Worried by the vanity of his writings, Greene falls asleep and dreams that Chaucer and Gower come to him, "grave laureates, the types of England's excellence for poetry." Chaucer comforts him with the example of the *Canterbury Tales*, "broad enough . . . and written homely and pleasantly," and tells a ribald story of Tompkins, the wheelwright of Grantchester. Gower, a strict Christian, replies with a pious *exemplum*. Greene decides that Gower is right, renounces love tales (after he has finished *Never Too Late*), and promises the public his *Mourning Garment*. Solomon then appears to confirm his judgment. Actually, one may be sure, no Solomon could have taught Greene to emulate the moral Gower. He led a sordid life, no doubt; but the legend of his special depravity rests mainly on his own practice of sensationalized autobiography and on the overheated revilings of Harvey. We may leave him with the reflection that a man who, dying at thirty-two, had pushed a quill pen over as much paper as was covered by his writings can have had no extraordinary leisure for Bacchanalian pleasures. The ultimate cause of Greene's death is more likely to have been overwork than Rhenish wine and pickled herrings.

Greene's  
Death

Greene's  
Followers:

Rowlands

Many writers imitated Greene, but none of them enjoyed such broad or lasting popularity. One of them, Samuel Rowlands (c. 1570-c. 1630), prefaces his poem, *'Tis Merry When Gossips Meet*<sup>17</sup> (1602) with a "conference between a gentleman and a 'prentice" supposed to occur ten years after Greene's death. The scene is a London book stall:

*Prentice*. What lack you, Gentleman? See a new book, new come forth, sir; buy a new book, sir.

*Gentleman*. New book, say'st? Faith, I can see no pretty thing come forth to my humor's liking. There are some old books that I have more delight in than your new, if thou couldst help me to them.

*Pren*. Troth, sir, I think I can show you as many of all sorts as any in London, sir.

<sup>16</sup> With these accounts should be compared Gabriel Harvey's contemporary evidence in his *Four Letters . . . Especially Touching Robert Greene, and Other Parties by him Abused* (1592; reprinted, "Bodley Head Quartos," II, 1922). Harvey had been made furiously angry by Greene's *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, and he by no means spares the dead man; but his account brings out the pathos of Greene's end, and it is he rather than Greene's literary executors who seems to give us the actual words of the dying man's message to his wife: "Doll, I charge thee by the love of our youth and by my soul's rest that thou wilt see this man paid, for if he and his wife had not succored me, I had died in the streets." See the following chapter.

<sup>17</sup> *The Complete Works of Samuel Rowlands*, Hunterian Club (Glasgow, 1880), Vol. I. The same volume contains *Greene's Ghost Haunting Cony-catchers* (1602).

*Gent.* Canst help me to all Greene's books in one volume? but I will have them every one, not any lacking.

*Pren.* Sir, I have the most part of them, but I lack *Cony-Catching* and some half dozen more; but I think I could procure them.

Henry Chettle<sup>18</sup> (c. 1560-c. 1607), the printer-playwright who published *Chettle Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*, issued his own *Kind-heart's Dream* three months later with a famous preface disavowing Greene's attack upon Shakespeare. Interest stops with the preface, for the body of the work is a poor blend of Greene and Nashe and has little narrative worth, except for one good conjuring story. A much better book is *Greene's News both from Heaven and Hell*<sup>19</sup> (1593) by B. R., giving a delightful account of the wanderings of Greene's ghost. The author is doubtless Barnabe Riche (c. 1540-1617), a retired captain whose industrious pen had already attempted fiction in the two parts of *The Strange and Wonderful Adventures of Don Simonides, a Gentleman Spaniard* (1581, 1584) and *The Adventures of Brusanus* (1592). These neither deserved, nor have yet obtained, a second edition;<sup>20</sup> but Riche was far luckier with his collection of eight *novelle*, *Riche his Farewell to Military Profession*<sup>21</sup> (1581), the second of which, "Of Apolonius and Silla," was used by Shakespeare, after some purifying, as the basis of *Twelfth Night*. Riche's tales, though "gathered together for the only delight of the courteous gentlewomen both of England and Ireland," have none of the delicacy of Lyly and Greene, and represent an earlier fashion. They are sometimes coarse in a bluff, soldierly way and make no pretension to style, but they have a good deal of narrative vigor.

Greene's *Menaphon* is probably the strongest influence, though Lyly and Sidney have also had an effect, on John Dickenson's *Arisbas* (1594), which is subtitled "Euphues amidst his Slumbers, or Cupid's Journey to Hell." *John Dickenson*,<sup>22</sup> who wrote considerably in Latin as well as English, has filled out his rather trivial plot with a great variety of occasional poetry, both in the normal English metres and in English hexameters, elegiacs, and sapphics. *Arisbas*, prince of Cyprus, eloping with Timoclea, is separated from her by a

<sup>18</sup> See H. Jenkins, *The Life and Work of Henry Chettle* (1934).

<sup>19</sup> Ed. R. B. McKerrow (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1922). Another imitator of Greene, identified only as "A," produced *Tell-troth's New-Year's Gift* and *The Passionate Morris* in 1593 (ed. F. J. Furnivall, New Shakspeare Soc., 1876). In the former and more interesting of these pamphlets Robin Goodfellow, fresh from Hell, meets Tell-troth near Islington on a frosty morning and discusses the causes of jealousy, which above all other vices fills the infernal regions.

<sup>20</sup> Similar neglect befell Austin Saker's *Narbonus, the Labyrinth of Liberty* (1580) and Anthony Munday's *Zelauto, the Fountain of Fame*, of the same year, in spite of the latter's not unattractive illustrations. Recently Munday's novel has received attention because of a parallel in its third part to the bond story of *The Merchant of Venice*. See F. Brie, *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, XLIX (1913), 97-122.

<sup>21</sup> Reprinted, Shakespeare Soc. (1846). See D. T. Starnes, "Barnabe Riche's 'Sapho Duke of Mantona': A Study in Elizabethan Story-making," *SP*, xxx (1933), 455-472. A different view of Riche is given by H. J. Webb, "Barnabe Riche, 16th Century Military Critic," *JEGP*, XLII (1943), 240-257. Somewhat similar to Riche's *Farewell*, and of the same date, are the seven stories in William Warner's *Pan his Syrinx* (1584, 1597), which are even more nautical and exotic. The first of Warner's tales, *Arbaces*, has a plot resemblance to a Fletcher-Massinger play, *The Sea-Voyage*.

<sup>22</sup> A. B. Grosart, *Prose and Verse by John Dickenson* (1878).

storm, which leaves him stranded in Arcadia, the guest of a friendly shepherd; while Timoclea, after escaping from pirates and finding refuge in another part of Arcadia, is recognized at a shepherd festival and rejoined to Arisbas. In *The Shepherd's Complaint* (c. 1596) Dickenson has not enough story to float the heavy concentration of pastoral verse; but his *Greene in Conceit* (1598) limits itself to a single rather excellent "canzon" and otherwise plods in moral prose through "the tragic history of fair Valeria of London," which Greene's ghost comes from the grave to urge him to complete. Dickenson's narrative style is not equal to his learning or to his poetic capacity. Without precisely imitating any of his models, he produces a self-conscious prose mainly remarkable for its striving after alliteration and pompous adjectives.

Lodge's  
Rosalind

The best of Greene's imitators in the romantic tale was Thomas Lodge<sup>23</sup> (c. 1558-1625). *Rosalind, Euphues' Golden Legacy*<sup>24</sup> (1590) owes comparatively little except the title to Lyly; indeed, the preliminary matter shows that Lodge, who wrote the book aboard ship, had even forgotten that Lyly's Philautus did *not* win his Camilla. The debt to Greene is clear; but *Rosalind* is a better story than any of Greene's, for Lodge has strengthened it by introducing good masculine material from the pseudo-Chaucerian *Tale of Gamelin*, and the inserted lyrics can vie with Greene's best. Shakespeare, in transforming it into *As You Like It*, added the characters of Touchstone and Jaques, but hardly found it necessary to improve upon the plot. The dénouement and the treatment of Oliver (i.e., Saladyne) are more plausible in the romance than in the play. *Rosalind* was deservedly popular, but it was Lodge's only success in this style. *The History of Forbonius and Prisceria*, appended to his *Alarum against Usurers* (1584), *Euphues' Shadow* (1592), and *A Margarite of America* (1596) are distinctly inferior, and so the public evidently thought, for none of them was able to reach a second edition. Yet Emanuel Forde's *Ornatus and Artesia* (c. 1595) and *Parismus, Prince of Bohemia* (1598) had a vogue, lasting quite through the seventeenth century, at which today one can only marvel.

Emanuel  
Forde

Greene's realistic vein was promptly taken up by one who signed himself "Cuthbert Cony-Catcher," in *The Defence of Cony-Catching* (1592), "a confutation of those two injurious pamphlets published by R. G."; and the entertaining Samuel Rowlands, previously mentioned, owed much to him, but the writer who best carried Greene's method into the seventeenth century was Thomas Dekker. In *News from Hell* (1606), expanded the next year into *A Knight's Conjuring*, Dekker is following both Nashe and Greene. In *Jests to Make You Merry* (1607), compiled with the assistance of George Wilkins, and particularly in his justly popular *Belman of London, Bringing to Light the Most Notorious Villainies* (1608), and its continuation,

Thomas  
Dekker

<sup>23</sup> *Complete Works of Thomas Lodge* (4v, Hunterian Club, Glasgow, 1883); N. B. Paradise, *Thomas Lodge: The History of an Elizabethan* (New Haven, 1931); C. J. Sisson, *Thomas Lodge and Other Elizabethans* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), pp. 1-163; E. A. Tenny, *Thomas Lodge* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1935); S. A. Tannenbaum, *Thomas Lodge: A Concise Bibliography* (1940).

<sup>24</sup> Ed. W. W. Greg (Oxford, 2ed., 1931).

*Lanthorn and Candle-Light*, Dekker gave a renewed vogue to the work of Harman and Greene, putting their realism within a romantic setting in which Euphuism has given place to a much more modern conception of prose harmony.<sup>25</sup> Thus, finally, the idealized vagabonds of Dekker passed into Jonson's masque<sup>26</sup> and Fletcher and Massinger's play.<sup>27</sup>

In the same year (1594) in which Shakespeare dedicated his *Rape of Lucrece* to the Earl of Southampton, that young nobleman received from Thomas Nashe a "fantastical treatise," as the author calls it, a highly seasoned narrative in prose which differs markedly from the rest of Nashe's work and has no very close relationship to anything else in Elizabethan literature. It is regrettable that the vein was not pursued, for the theme, a young Englishman's experiences in seeking Italy, was one of paramount interest for the age.<sup>28</sup> *The Unfortunate Traveler*<sup>29</sup> has no real structure, except that it begins with incidents of a farcical kind and develops into melodrama; but it carries the reader along the main-traveled road of the Elizabethan gallant, through France, Münster, Wittenberg, the Emperor's court, Venice, Florence, and Rome. The narrator is a young page, Jack Wilton, and the supposed time is that halcyon period, the early years of Henry VIII. It is less a novel than a series of tales, gay and sinister, in all of which Wilton has a part; but it points the way from afar to the historical novels of Scott by introducing famous personages like the poet Surrey, Erasmus, More, Luther, and Aretino, in unhistoric and anachronistic relations. Nashe's wit and peculiar brilliance in description make it one of the most readable books of its time.

Quasi-  
Historical  
Novels

Nashe, The  
Unfortunate  
Traveler

Thomas Deloney<sup>30</sup> (d. 1600) has even less sense of unified fiction. A silk-weaver by trade and a copious writer of narrative ballads, in his prose books he gave exaggerated pictures of the bourgeois society he knew against pseudo-historic backgrounds. The earliest, *Jack of Newbury* (1597), is set in the same period that Nashe selected for *The Unfortunate Traveler*. Where Nashe begins with life in Henry VIII's camp during the French expedition of 1513, Deloney gives us life among the clothworkers in the Berkshire town of Newbury at the same period. The eleven chapters are separate anecdotes, held together by the figure of the incredibly shrewd and prosperous weaver, John Winchcomb, who marries the widow of his rich employer, equips a company of 250 artisans for war against the Scots in the Flodden campaign (1513), and performs other acts to the greater glory of the English clothworkers, to whom the book is dedicated. In *Thomas*

Thomas  
Deloney

<sup>25</sup> See G. V. Jones, "Greene and Dekker," *LTLS*, June 11, 1925, p. 400, and letter by R. B. McKerrrow in next issue (June 18), p. 416. For more on Dekker's prose see next chapter.

<sup>26</sup> *The Gypsies Metamorphosed* (1621).

<sup>27</sup> *Beggars' Bush* (1622).

<sup>28</sup> Something of Jack Wilton's spirit is found in two biographical works: Anthony Munday's *The English-Roman Life*, 1582 (reprinted, "Bodley Head Quartos," xii, 1925); and still more in Thomas Coryate's *Crudities*, 1611 (reprinted, 2v, Glasgow, 1905).

<sup>29</sup> Ed. H. F. B. Brett-Smith (Oxford, 1920), and in R. B. McKerrrow, *Works of Thomas Nashe*, Vol. II.

<sup>30</sup> F. O. Mann, *The Works of Thomas Deloney* (Oxford, 1912); A. Chevalley, *Thomas Deloney* (Paris, 1926); Ll. Powys, "Thomas Deloney," *Virginia Quar. Rev.*, ix (1933). 578-594.

of *Reading, or the Six Worthy Yeomen of the West*, Deloney draws a longer bow, setting his fifteen stories far back in the reign of Henry I, the Conqueror's son, when (to believe him) the salient fact about English life was the bourgeois magnificence of Thomas Cole and his cronies, master-weavers all, who travel like princes through the country at the head of caravans of fine cloth and enjoy the unlimited admiration of their sovereign. In *The Gentle Craft* (1597) Deloney treated the shoemakers to the same flattery, with such effect that Dekker promptly dramatized one tale in *The Shoemakers' Holiday* (1599), and a second part, consisting of eleven more shoemaker stories, was issued.

Deloney's homely tales were so well read that the early editions seem to have entirely perished; they are known today only in late reprints.<sup>31</sup> It is not, however, to be supposed that in Deloney prose fiction took a long step forward, or that anything like what we now call a realistic novel was in view. What Deloney's popularity indicates is that there was a strong revulsion in taste from the fantastic aristocracy of Lyly and Greene.<sup>32</sup> As intelligent readers tired of Euphuism, middle-class reading matter for a moment filled its place.<sup>33</sup> Such were the stories of Deloney, the old-fashioned romances that Anthony Munday translated,<sup>34</sup> and a quantity of frank jest books<sup>35</sup> not much more developed than those mentioned at the opening of the preceding chapter. These works, however, could not long hold the attention of thinking people, and prose fiction, in a very remarkable degree, faded from the English intellectual horizon in the seventeenth century.

*The Decline  
of Prose  
Fiction*

Sidney's *Arcadia* excepted, Elizabethan literature failed to produce any work of fictional prose comparable in largeness and nobility with its productions in other fields. One reason may be that prose as an aesthetic art had not yet quite "arrived," and its practitioners were driven to emphasize its claims by petty prettinesses inconsistent with a major effort. It is also true that in that age the place in men's minds and education now held by the more thoughtful novels was occupied by the work of the great historians and classical translators, such as Holinshed and North, and particularly by such tales of actual adventure as Richard Hakluyt collected in his *Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589-1600).

<sup>31</sup> E.g., the earliest edition of *Jack of Newbury* known to the *Short-Title Catalogue* is that of 1619, marked as the eighth printing.

<sup>32</sup> For Deloney's Euphuistic sources, which he sadly misuses, see two articles by H. E. Rollins, *PMLA*, L (1935), 679-686; LI (1936), 399-406.

<sup>33</sup> One should consult L. B. Wright's comprehensive and authoritative book, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill, 1935).

<sup>34</sup> *Palmerin of England*, three parts (c. 1581-1597); *Palmerin d'Oliva* (1588), *Palladine of England* (1588), *History of Palmendos* (1589), *Gerileon of England* (1592), *Primalcion of Greece* (1619), *Amadis of Gaul* (1619). See Celeste Turner, *Anthony Munday, an Elizabethan Man of Letters* (Berkeley, Calif., 1928).

<sup>35</sup> E.g., *Tarlton's News out of Purgatory* (1590) and *Tarlton's Jests* (1609); *The Cobbler of Canterbury* (1590); *Merry Conceited Jests of George Peele* (1607); Robert Armin, *A Nest of Ninnies* (1608). Of similar quality are the very popular prose chapbooks dealing with Friar Bacon, Dr. Faustus, Friar Rush, George-a-Greene, etc. (see W. J. Thoms, *Early English Prose Romances*, 3v, 1858), which have an affinity with some well-known plays, and Richard Johnson's *Most Famous History of the Seven Champions of Christendom* (1596), which lasted far into the eighteenth century and affected the later development of the St. George plays (see E. K. Chambers, *The English Folk-Play*, Oxford, 1933, pp. 174 ff.).



This is the work which Froude described in a much quoted phrase as "the *Richard* prose epic of the modern English nation."<sup>36</sup> A recent scholar has thus *Hakluyt* analyzed it:

The collection of more than one hundred long narratives is composed by nearly as many hands. Some of these hands were of exceeding skill, like Raleigh's and like Hakluyt's own in his translations. Some were crude and unfinished, like those of many of the sailors who copied their log books . . . The romance of action runs through even the most pedestrian account of perils and profits, to reach its height in the naval exploits against Spain and in the exploring of the frozen north. The romance of wonder at the marvels of man and of nature illumines the whole fabric of the work which portrays the epic enterprise of England.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> J. A. Froude, "England's Forgotten Worthies," in *Short Studies of Great Subjects*, ed. 1873, p. 361.

<sup>37</sup> G. B. Parks, *Richard Hakluyt and the English Voyages* (1928), pp. 187-199. See also Walter Ralceigh, *The English Voyages of the Sixteenth Century* (Glasgow, 1906). Hakluyt's collection is handsomely reprinted (12v, Hakluyt Soc., Glasgow, 1903-5).



# V

## Miscellaneous Prose

*The Tudor Translations* From Sir Thomas Hoby's *Book of the Courtier* (1561) to John Florio's Montaigne and Philemon Holland's Plutarch (both in 1603) a massive line of translated classics extends through the Elizabethan period.<sup>1</sup> The august series began earlier, indeed, with Caxton and Berners, and continued, though with abated vigor, into the period of James I. Shakespeare was indebted concretely to each of the three works mentioned, and in still higher degree to Golding's Ovid (1567) and Bartholomew Yong's Montemayor (1598); his greatest debt is to what stylistically is the greatest translation of all, Sir Thomas North's version of Plutarch's *Lives* (1579). The series, which reached a higher level in prose than in verse, included some of the most recent as well as some of the most ancient of the world's great books—Harington's Ariosto<sup>2</sup> (1591) and Shelton's Cervantes (1612) as well as Chapman's Homer (1598-1616) and the various late Greek romances.<sup>3</sup> It brought with it an avalanche of plot material and at the same time schooled the new English prose by discipleship to what had been best thought and said in the literature of Greece, Rome, France, Italy, and Spain. Only a peculiarly vigorous national style could have kept its course under such stress of foreign influence, but the Elizabethan translations are always more Elizabethan than translated.

### Standards for Prose

The most worrying problem for Elizabethan writers and speakers was the problem of domesticating the vast quantity of foreign words which humanism had introduced, and which made too many authors resemble the characters in *Love's Labor's Lost* who had "been at a great feast of languages and stolen the scraps."<sup>4</sup> Lord Berners, in the preface to his translation of Froissart (1523), illustrates the vice:

They [i.e., the writers of histories] show, open, manifest, and declare to the reader, by example of old antiquity, what we should enquire, desire, and follow, and also what we should eschew, avoid, and utterly fly; for when we, being unexpert of chances, see, behold, and read the auncient acts, gestes, and deeds,

<sup>1</sup> See the two series of *The Tudor Translations*, 1892-1903 (32 vol.), 1924-1927 (12 vol.); also H. F. B. Brett-Smith and S. Gaselee, *The Loves of Clitophon and Leucippe*, translated by Wm. Burton, 1597 (Oxford, 1923); C. H. Conley, *The First English Translators of the Classics* (New Haven, 1927); F. O. Matthiessen, *Translation, an Elizabethan Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931); A. F. Clements, *Tudor Translations, an Anthology* (Oxford, 1940).

<sup>2</sup> See Townsend Rich, *Harington and Ariosto, a Study in Elizabethan Verse Translation* (New Haven, 1940).

<sup>3</sup> See S. L. Wolff, *The Greek Romances in Elizabethan Prose Fiction* (1912).

<sup>4</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of English linguistic problems in the Renaissance see A. C. Baugh, *A History of the English Language* (1935), ch. viii.

how and with what labors, dangers, and perils they were gested and done, they right greatly admonest, ensigne, and teach us how we may lead forth our lives.

The soundest of the humanists—such men as Sir John Cheke and Ascham—were strongest in disapproval of this tendency to false learning and redundancy, urging the removal of all “inkhorn terms”; and the same ascetic spirit informed the influential textbooks of Thomas Wilson (c. 1525-1581), “whose discretion,” as Barnabe Barnes said, “did redress our English barbarism.”<sup>5</sup> Wilson’s *Rule of Reason*, which is a manual of logic, went through seven editions between 1551 and 1593, and his *Art of Rhetoric*<sup>6</sup> had eight between 1553 and 1585. Rhetoric is defined by Wilson as the art of the orator, and it is spoken English that he particularly considers. His theory of style is in no wise original, and repeats much that had already been said on the authority of Cicero or other ancients by Leonard Cox (*The Art or Craft of Rhetoric*, 1524, 1532) and Richard Sherry (*A Treatise of the Figures of Grammar and Rhetoric*, 1555); but Wilson was more complete, more amusing, and much more popular.<sup>7</sup> His warnings against inkhorn terms, vulgar ostentation, and other faults of language are enforced by humorous anecdotes and sample letters or speeches, which point to the earliest model-letter book, *The Enemy of Idleness*, by William Fulwood, and so to Breton’s beloved *Post with a Mad Packet of Letters* (1602) and, in the course of time, *Pamela*.<sup>8</sup> It would have been unfortunate if the austere ideal of Cheke and Wilson had dominated Elizabethan prose,<sup>9</sup> but this was the least of dangers at that time, and the *Art of Rhetoric* served to buttress a flamboyant generation against the extravagances of Euphuism.

Thomas  
Wilson

*The First Part of the Elementary, Which Entreateth Chiefly of the Right Writing of our English Tongue*<sup>10</sup> (1582) by Richard Mulcaster (c. 1530-1611) is a work of the same tendency and of equal distinction. It is a weighty though doubtless over-philosophical discourse on elementary education by the most famous schoolmaster of the age, who was head of the Merchant Taylors’ School in London when Spenser studied there, and later master at St. Paul’s. Mulcaster’s discussion of the rules for spelling is of importance to students of Elizabethan phonetics, and his book reaches the height of a plain style in the “peroration,” which includes a notable defense of English as a literary language:

Richard  
Mulcaster

<sup>5</sup> Prefatory sonnet to Harvey’s *Pierce’s Supererogation* (Grosart, *Works of Gabriel Harvey*, II. 24).

<sup>6</sup> *Wilson’s Art of Rhetorique*, 1560, ed. G. H. Mair (Oxford, 1909).

<sup>7</sup> See R. H. Wagner, “Thomas Wilson’s Contributions to Rhetoric,” in *Papers in Rhetoric*, ed. D. C. Bryant (St. Louis, 1940), pp. 1-7. On all these writers consult Wm. G. Crane, *Wisdom and Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (1937); and for Sherry in particular see T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakespeare’s Small Latine and Lesse Greeke* (Urbana, 1944), II. 35-39.

<sup>8</sup> See K. G. Hornbeak, *The Complete Letter-Writer, 1568-1800* (Northampton, Mass., 1934).

<sup>9</sup> George Pettie replied very effectively in the preface to his translation of Guazzo’s *Civil Conversation* (1581).

<sup>10</sup> Ed. E. T. Campagnac (Oxford, 1925). Mulcaster did not publish a second part of his *Elementary*, but in the previous year (1581) had dedicated to Queen Elizabeth a somewhat similar work called *Positions*. For fuller consideration of Mulcaster see A. C. Baugh, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-255; and R. F. Jones, “Richard Mulcaster’s View of the English Language,” *Washington Univ. Studies*, XIII (1926). 267-303.

I love Rome, but London better; I favor Italy, but England more; I honor the Latin, but I worship the English... I do not think that any language, be it whatsoever, is better able to utter all arguments, either with more pith or greater plainness, than our English tongue is, if the English utterer be as skilful in the matter which he is to utter as the foreign utterer is.

*The Art of Poetry*

*Gascoigne's Notes of Instruction*

*Latin Metres for English Verse*

*Webbe*

Early Elizabethan poetry was not certain of its purposes and led to no criticism<sup>11</sup> that went deeper than George Gascoigne's *Certain Notes of Instruction concerning the Making of Verse or Rime in English* (1575). These "notes," as they truly are, extend to less than ten pages and were written at the request of Master Eduardo Donati, presumably a novice in the art. They are wholly superficial, but have the value which Gascoigne's intelligence and long experience in his craft could give even to trifling observations.

There was, however, a very fundamental question in the air, critical for the whole future of English poetry, which found expression in the series of letters exchanged between Spenser and Gabriel Harvey in 1579-80.<sup>12</sup> From these it appears that groups of young scholars, including Spenser, Sidney, and Dyer in London and the Harvey brothers at Cambridge, were seriously concerned to follow up a hint of Ascham's<sup>13</sup> and work out a new English prosody on classical quantitative lines.<sup>14</sup> It was the equivalent in aesthetics of the search for the Northwest Passage; much labor and some poetic lives were lost in it. It was no unreasonable revolt against the rudeness of poulter's measure and riding rime, and if poetic miracles had not occurred in the 1580's, it might well have won the day and brought in night. The irony is that the particular miracle-workers, Spenser and Sidney, are so conspicuous in the other camp. William Webbe's attractive *Discourse of English Poetry*, "together with the author's judgment touching the reformation of our English verse" (1586), is mainly notable for its enthusiastic admiration of the "new poet," Spenser, and its not quite consistent faith in the practicality of Latin metres for English poems. Webbe translates two of Virgil's eclogues into English hexameters and puts Spenser's song in the "April"

<sup>11</sup> The most important texts are assembled in J. Haslewood, *Ancient Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poesy* (2v, 1811, 1815); and G. G. Smith, *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (2v, Oxford, 1904). On the general subject see F. E. Schelling, *Poetic and Verse Criticism of the Reign of Elizabeth* (Philadelphia, 1891; *Univ. of Pennsylvania Ser. in Philology, etc.*, Vol. 1, No. 1.) For the philosophical background see J. E. Spingarn, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* (1899; 5th impression, 1925) and C. S. Baldwin, *Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice* (ed. D. L. Clark, 1939).

<sup>12</sup> *Three Proper and Witty Familiar Letters, Lately Passed between Two University Men* (1580); *Two Other Very Commendable Letters of the Same Men's Writing* (1580). Reprinted in complete editions of Spenser.

<sup>13</sup> "How our English tongue, in avoiding barbarous riming, may as well receive right quantity of syllables and true order of versifying... as either Greek or Latin, if a cunning man have it in handling" (*Schoolmaster*, ed. W. A. Wright, 1904, p. 224).

<sup>14</sup> One of Ascham's most earnest followers in the effort to latinize English prosody was the learned, Oxford-bred, and much-traveled Irishman, Richard Stanyhurst (1547-1618), who translated the first four books of the *Aeneid* into English hexameter, "a foul, lumbering, boisterous, wallowing measure," as Nashe not unjustly called it (but see the defense of this work in D. van der Haar's edition, Amsterdam, 1933). Stanyhurst was a notable spelling reformer and coiner of new words, and his various prefaces are of interest to students of linguistic reform. He wrote the *Description of Ireland* for Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577) and continued Edmund Campion's *History of Ireland* (cf. below, ch. ix).

section of the *Shepherds' Calendar* into sapphics. He is forced to break off exhausted, but with his optimism unimpaired, "for in truth," he says,

I am persuaded a little pain-taking might furnish our speech with as much pleasant delight in this kind of verse as any other whatsoever.

The same *ignis fatuus* sixteen years later misled the great lyricist and musician, Thomas Campion, in his *Observations in the Art of English Poesy* (1602), in which he offers unfortunate examples of eight Anglo-Latin metres; and Campion's misguided performance called forth Samuel Daniel's *Defense of Rime*<sup>15</sup> (1603), which, along with Nashe's effective lampooning, for a while laid the ghosts of English iambics, sapphics, hexameters, and the like.

George Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy*<sup>16</sup> (1589) observes a moderate and skeptical, though wistful, attitude toward the metrical innovations from Latin. Puttenham's is the longest, and with the exception of Sidney's the best, of the Elizabethan manuals of poetry. He handles problems of prosody, as Wilson does those of prose, with scientific method, and discusses recent English poets somewhat more broadly than Webbe. The fourth chapter of Book III, "Of Language," is an acute essay on spoken English, and chapter 24, "Of Decency in Behavior," shows that the enigmatic author was not only a literary critic, but also an accomplished philosopher, courtier, and gentleman. Another such was Sir John Harington, whose *Brief Apology of Poetry and of the Author*, prefixed to his translation of the *Orlando Furioso* (1591), is a frank and amusing reply to the Puritan critics.<sup>17</sup> Wit and coherent argument are both forbidden by the mechanical form of the twenty-five pages Francis Meres devotes to poetry and poets in his encyclopedic *Palladis Tamia*<sup>18</sup> (1598), but the richness of his details makes this shoddy work rank in usefulness at the top of all the criticism of the decade.

The Martin Marprelate pamphlets of 1588-89<sup>19</sup> evoked replies likewise anonymous and written in the same strain of unmannerly invective. These irregular auxiliaries of the established clergy were from some of the best pens in England. *Pap with an Hatchet*<sup>20</sup> (1589) is by Lyly; *An Almond for a Parrot*<sup>21</sup> (1590) may be by Greene; but the author who most delighted in the fray was apparently young Tom Nashe (1567-c. 1601), whose first work, *The Anatomy of Absurdity*<sup>22</sup> (1589), had shown an indiscriminating desire to be witty at the cost of Euphuistic writers, women, hypocrites, bad poets, students, gluttons, and anything else. Nashe's most judicious editor

<sup>15</sup> These are both available in "Bodley Head Quartos," No. xiv (1925).

<sup>16</sup> G. D. Willcock and A. Walker, *The Arte of English Poesie by George Puttenham* (Cambridge, 1936).

<sup>17</sup> Harington was a man of many gifts. See Norman E. McClure, *The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington, together with The Praise of Private Life* (Philadelphia, 1930).

<sup>18</sup> D. C. Allen, *Francis Meres's Treatise "Poetrie"* (Urbana, 1933).

<sup>19</sup> See above, Part I, ch. vi.

<sup>20</sup> Reprinted, Bond, *Works of John Lyly*, III, 389-413.

<sup>21</sup> Reprinted, McKerrow, *Works of Thomas Nashe*, III, 337-376. For extensive evidence favoring Nashe's authorship of this pamphlet see D. J. McGinn, "Nashe's Share in the Marprelate Controversy," *PMLA*, LIX (1944), pp. 952-984.

<sup>22</sup> This was inspired by Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuses*. See below, and D. C. Allen, "The Anatomy of Absurdity, a Study in Literary Apprenticeship," *SP*, xxxii (1935), 170-177.

Nashe and  
Harvey

finds no particular evidence of his hand in the "Pasquil of England" pamphlets<sup>23</sup> usually attributed to him; but there can be no doubt that he joined with much spirit and with improvement of his invective style in the general hue and cry after Martin, and he may have had a part in the anti-Martin plays which were much referred to, but not preserved.

Nashe's next acknowledged work, *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil* (Aug., 1592), shows how much more entertainingly than in the *Anatomy of Absurdity* he could now rail at the contemporary scene.<sup>24</sup> He devises an amusing fable which enables him, among other things, to analyze each of the Seven Deadly Sins; pauses in his treatment of sloth for an interesting defense of plays, and inserts into the section on wrath four pages of colorful abuse on the sons of Harvey, the Saffron Walden ropemaker, one of whom had sneered at Nashe's preface to *Menaphon*.<sup>25</sup> It is quite delightful, for those whose withers are unwrung, and all in the spirit of clean sport. Stopping for breath and punctuation, Nashe invokes his readers:

Have I not an indifferent pretty vein in spur-galling an ass? If you knew how extemporal it were at this instant, and with what haste it is writ, you would say so. But I would not have you think that all this that is set down here is in good earnest . . . but only to show how for a need I could rail if I were thoroughly fired.<sup>26</sup>

Harvey's  
Four Letters

Nashe's liberties were taken at an unlucky time, for the Harvey brothers had just been more than sufficiently spur-galled in Greene's *Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (July, 1592), where a passage that was later canceled had assified them with art and precision.<sup>27</sup> The eldest of the brothers, Spenser's friend Gabriel, whose family affection was as enormous as his vanity, went to London early in September with the idea of prosecuting Greene at law, but arrived just as the latter died. He vented his feelings in the angry *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets, Especially Touching Robert Greene and Other Parties by Him Abused*<sup>28</sup> (dated September 16, 1592), which is largely responsible for the odor of unsanctity that clings about Greene's memory. Naturally, he fulminated against *Pierce Penniless* also, but less vindictively, and in the last letter called upon Nashe to repent and be forgiven.

Nashe's  
Strange  
News

Nashe, however, replied in a pamphlet, the very title of which is a lewd jest: *Strange News of the Intercepting Certain Letters and a Convoy of Verses as They Were Going Privily to Victual the Low Countries* (January, 1593). It contains several apologies for Greene, which should be considered,

<sup>23</sup> *A Countercuff Given to Martin Junior by . . . Pasquil of England* (1589), *The First Part of Pasquil's Apology* (1590). See R. B. McKerrow, *Works of Thomas Nashe*, v (1910), 34-65.

<sup>24</sup> For works of Nashe referred to in this section see McKerrow's ed. just cited; for works of Harvey see A. B. Grosart, *Works of Gabriel Harvey* (3v, 1884). Consult also C. Saunders, *Robert Greene and the Harveys* (Bloomington, Ind., 1931).

<sup>25</sup> The offender was not Gabriel, but Richard Harvey, in the Preface to his *Lamb of God* (1590).

<sup>26</sup> Ed. McKerrow, I, 199.

<sup>27</sup> This passage seems to be preserved only in the Huntington Library copy. See G. W. Cole, "Bibliography—A Forecast," in *Papers of Bibl. Soc. of America*, xiv (1920), 7, 8.

<sup>28</sup> Separately reprinted, "Bodley Head Quartos," no. 11 (1922). See F. R. Johnson, "The First Edition of Gabriel Harvey's *Four Letters*," *Library*, 4 ser., xv (1934), 212-223.



and makes sad havoc of Harvey's dignity by commenting *seriatim* on his charges. Harvey, though he wielded a wicked pen, was no match for this antagonist. His *Pierce's Supererogation* (1593), or "a new praise of the old ass," shows that his anger had consumed what little humor and discretion he possessed. It is quite unduly long, for it incorporates a hundred pages against *Pap with an Hatchet* that had been written in 1589, and it is indeed the huge ungainly lamentation of a thin-skinned man in a nettle bed. He flaunts the flattering letters of his literary friends as a dog licks its wounds and snaps out in all directions against each of his four bugbears: Nashe, Greene, Lyly, and Doctor Perne of Cambridge. There is, however, plenty of power in Harvey's prose. His long diatribe against Perne is a model of academic venom, and in his anger with Nashe he sometimes pays the perfect tribute to the latter's style, calling him in one place "this brave Columbus of terms,"<sup>29</sup> and complaining in another that "his pen is like a spigot." "Nashe, Nashe, Nashe," he cries,

Harvey,  
Pierce's  
Supererogation

Vain Nashe, railing Nashe, craking Nashe, bibbing Nashe, baggage Nashe, swaddish Nashe, roguish Nashe, Nashe the belwether of the scribbling flock, the swish-swash of the press, the bum of impudency, the shambles of beastliness, the polecat of Paul's Churchyard, the screech-owl of London, the toadstool of the realm, the scorning-stock of the world, and the horrible confuter of four letters.<sup>30</sup>

A little later in the same year (October, 1593)<sup>31</sup> Harvey's *New Letter of Notable Contents* appeared, a confused work that adds nothing to his reputation. His state of mind is apparent in the ghoulish but incoherent glee with which he welcomes the recent news of Marlowe's death.<sup>32</sup> Nashe should perhaps not have replied, and he was slow to do so. In his *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* (September, 1593), which is really a moral exhortation to London, he renounces "fantastical satirism," and asks pardon of all his enemies, "even of Master Dr. Harvey"; but as *Pierce's Supererogation* and the *New Letter* came out just after, the second edition of *Christ's Tears* (1594) has a brief but indignant withdrawal of the reconciliation. *The Unfortunate Traveler* (1594) says nothing of Harvey, and it was not till 1596 that smouldering wrath, or perhaps the expostulations of Nashe's friends, caused the latter to give Harvey his quietus in *Have with You to Saffron Walden, or Gabriel Harvey's Hunt Is Up*. It is cruel, crushing, and complete, perhaps the brightest and most pungent of all Nashe's works of raillery. Whether Harvey wrote the *Trimming of Thomas Nashe*, which appeared pseudonymously the next year, is doubtful and unimportant, for it did nothing to retrieve the situation. Nashe turned to dramatic satire, and for collaborating with Ben Jonson in the now lost comedy, *The Isle of Dogs*

Harvey's  
New Letter

Nashe,  
Have with  
You to  
Saffron  
Walden

<sup>29</sup> "This brave Columbus of terms and this only merchant-venturer of quarrels, that detecteth new Indies of invention" (p. 45).

<sup>30</sup> Ed. Grosart, II. 273.

<sup>31</sup> *Pierce's Supererogation* is dated by Harvey Apr. 27, 1593, but the book was not published at once.

<sup>32</sup> See H. Moore, "Gabriel Harvey's References to Marlowe," *SP*, xxiii (1926). 337-357.

Nashe's  
Lenten  
Stuff

(July, 1597), had to flee to Yarmouth<sup>33</sup> and lie *perdu* among the herring-fishers. He improved the occasion by putting together the pleasant gallimaufry, *Nashe's Lenten Stuff, or the Praise of the Red Herring* (1599), interesting as an extended, though jocular, attempt to write the history of a municipal corporation and an article of commerce. It was his last work, for the censors of printing had had enough of him and Harvey, and extinguished both as literary forces by their decree of June 1, 1599:

That all Nashe's books and Dr. Harvey's books be taken, wheresoever they may be found, and that none of their books be ever printed hereafter.<sup>34</sup>

This rigor did not long inconvenience Nashe, for he was dead by 1601, and Dekker had a vision of him in the Elysian fields, where

*The End of  
Nashe and  
Harvey*

Marlowe, Greene, and Peele had got under the shades of a large vine, laughing to see Nashe that was but newly come to their college.<sup>35</sup>

But Harvey lived on in Saffron Walden for thirty years longer, ingloriously mute, in melancholy refutation of the judgment Spenser had written of him before Nashe was known:

Harvey, thee happy above happiest men  
I read [i.e., esteem], that, sitting like a looker-on  
Of this world's stage, dost note with critic pen  
The sharp dislikes of each condition. . . .<sup>36</sup>

The Marprelate controversy and the quarrel of Harvey and Nashe supplied the joints of English prose almost incredibly. Without such models one could hardly imagine the language of Lyly and Greene being accelerated in less than a generation into the talk of Falstaff or such a gem of vilification as that of Kent on Oswald:

A knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-liver'd, action-taking knave; a whoreson, glass-gazing, super-serviceable, finical rogue . . . and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.<sup>37</sup>

Thomas Dekker (c. 1572-1632) was Nashe's successor as well as Greene's.<sup>38</sup> His *News from Hell, or The Devil's Answer to Pierce Penniless* (1606) is confessedly a sequel to Nashe's *Supplication*, and shows how Dekker has

<sup>33</sup> So Nashe says, but he may have actually retired to Lowestoft, his birthplace, which is less than fifteen miles from Yarmouth.

<sup>34</sup> E. Arber, *Transcript of the Register of the Company of Stationers*, III. 677.

<sup>35</sup> Dekker, *A Knight's Conjuring* (1607).

<sup>36</sup> Spenser's sonnet is dated Dublin, July 18, 1586, and was first printed in Harvey's *Four Letters* (1592).

<sup>37</sup> *King Lear*, II. ii. 15 ff.—Harington's brilliantly Rabelaisian *Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596) belongs to the same year as Nashe's *chef d'œuvre*, *Have with You to Saffron Walden*, which probably drew an illustration from it (see McKerrow, *Nashe*, III. 38). Harington is hardly Nashe's inferior in this robust and witty prose; but one of the sequel pieces, *Ulysses upon Ajax*, is merely coarse and is most likely not by Harington. See A. E. M. Kirwood, "The *Metamorphosis of Ajax* and its Sequels," *Library*, 4 ser., XII (1931). 208-34.

<sup>38</sup> See above, ch. IV. Dekker's nondramatic works are edited by A. B. Grosart (5v, 1884-86).



taken over Nashe's vivacity and his knack of working the macabre into social criticism, as in this picture of Charon's ferry:

In a few minutes, therefore, is he come to the bankside of Acheron, where you are not baited by whole kennels of yelping watermen, as you are at Westminster-bridge, and ready to be torn in pieces to have twopence towed out of your purse. No, shipwrights there could hardly live; there's but one boat, and in that one Charon is the only ferryman; so that if a Cales knight<sup>39</sup> should bawl his heart out, he cannot get a pair of oars there to do him grace with "I plied your worship first," but must be glad to go with a sculler. By which means, though the fare be small (for the waterman's wages was at first but a halfpenny, then it came to a penny, 'tis now mended and is grown to three halfpence; for all things wax dear in hell, as well as upon earth, by reason 'tis so populous) yet the gains of it are greater in a quarter than ten western barges get in a year. Ditchet Ferry comes nothing near it.<sup>40</sup>

Dekker was a gentler person than Nashe, and had a suaver style. *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* (1606) follows in a lighter vein Nashe's condemnation of the citizens' vices in the latter part of *Christ's Tears*, whereas Nashe's treatment of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, in the earlier part of the same work, finds its parallel in Dekker's versified *Canaan's Calamity* (1618). Dekker is the great chronicler of the London plagues in a series of pamphlets<sup>41</sup> beginning with *The Wonderful Year* (1603), in which, after his wont, narrations of the grimmest horror are interspersed with passages of the purest fantasy and descriptive beauty. His most famous prose work is *The Gull's Hornbook* (1609), which, with an irony too urbane for Nashe, instructs the young gallant from the country how he can make the greatest nuisance of himself through the various occupations of a London day. Chapter VI, "How a Gallant Should Behave Himself in a Playhouse," is perhaps the neatest, for Dekker is always at his best when talking of the stage, and he alludes to it so continually in his prose works that they are a happy hunting ground for students of the drama.<sup>42</sup>

Thomas  
Dekker

The Gull's  
Hornbook

Articulate Puritanism in Elizabeth's reign, in so far as it discussed public morals rather than church government, is closely associated with criticism of the contemporary theatre.<sup>43</sup> The earliest pamphlet of this kind followed by only a year or two the opening of the first two regular playhouses, the Theatre and Curtain in Shoreditch. It is John Northbrooke's *Treatise wherein Dicing, Dancing, Vain Plays or Interludes, with Other Idle Pastimes . . . Are Reproved* (c. 1577).<sup>44</sup> Quoting broadly from both the pagan classics and the Christian, Northbrooke throws his argument into the form of a dialogue

The Stage  
and Public  
Morality

North-  
brooke's  
Treatise

<sup>39</sup> I.e., a knight dubbed on the Cadiz expedition of 1596.

<sup>40</sup> Ed. Grosart, II. 117.

<sup>41</sup> F. P. Wilson, *The Plague Pamphlets of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford, 1925).

<sup>42</sup> See W. J. Lawrence, "Dekker's Theatrical Allusiveness," *LTLS*, xxxvi, Jan. 30, 1937, p. 72.

<sup>43</sup> See E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford, 1923), IV. 184-259; E. N. S. Thompson, *The Controversy between the Puritans and the Stage* (1903); T. S. Graves, "Notes on Puritanism and the Stage," *SP*, XVIII (1921), 141-169; W. Ringler, "The First Phase of the Elizabethan Attack on the Stage, 1558-1579," *HLQ*, V (1942), 391-418.

<sup>44</sup> Ed. J. P. Collier for the Shakespeare Soc. (1843).

between an old man and a young. The tone is that of a moderate though determined Puritan, and the discussion proceeds through a castigation of contemporary Sabbath-breaking and idleness to condemnation of stage-players and "those places also which are made up and builded for such plays and enterludes, as the *Theatre* and *Curtain* is, and other such like places besides." "God be merciful to this realm of England," the Old Man says,

for we begin to have itching ears and loathe that heavenly manna, as appeareth by their slow and negligent coming unto sermons, and running so fast and so many, continually, unto plays. . . .

Yet he grants that academic and school plays may be permitted, provided that they be free from ribaldry or wanton love, inexpensively staged, infrequent, and not produced for gain but "for learning and utterance' sake, in Latin, and very seldom in English."

Gosson, The  
School of  
Abuse

Northbrooke's dignified protest was quickly followed, and in a way travestied, by Stephen Gosson's "pleasant invective against poets, pipers, players, jesters, and such-like caterpillars of a commonwealth," which he entitled *The School of Abuse*<sup>45</sup> (1579). Young Master Gosson (1554-1624), who, like Marlowe, was son of a Canterbury tradesman and had been bred at the same excellent school, had been Lyly's contemporary at Oxford, and was Lyly's ape in style. His brief discourse, when stripped of its Euphuistic husk and classical digressions, is to this effect: Gosson has written plays himself; he mentions three by title (all now lost), and states in the first sentence of his address to the reader that they "are daily to be seen upon stages." He has, however, reformed and wishes to tell the world that poetry, piping, and playing "are of great affinity and all three chained in links of abuse." Modern England is a sink of iniquity. "*Experto crede*: I have seen somewhat, and therefore I think I may say the more." "In our assemblies of plays in London," the reader may see "such heaving and shoving, such itching and shouldering to sit by women," that Gosson's soul revolts, though his pen goes on to round out a luscious and very mannered paragraph. Yet he knows that some of the players are very excellent men, and some of the plays presented at the Theatre and at the Belsavage and Bull innyards are admirable, among which is his own *Catiline's Conspiracies*, but "because it is a pig of mine own sow" he will speak the less of it.

These plays are good plays, and sweet plays, and of all plays the best plays, and most to be liked, worthy to be sung of the muses, or set out with the cunning of Roscius himself; yet are they not fit for every man's diet.

Therefore, says Gosson, who was soon to become a parson,

Let us but shut up our ears to poets, pipers and players; pull our feet back from resort to theatres, and turn away our eyes from beholding of vanity, [and] the greatest storm of abuse will be overblown and a fair path trodden to amendment of life.

<sup>45</sup> Reprinted by the Shakespeare Soc. (1841) and by E. Arber (1868). Consult W. Ringler, *Stephen Gosson* (Princeton, 1943).

The frothy stuff, which may have been written to the order of the City authorities, was frothily dedicated to Philip Sidney, and we have Spenser's testimony that the author "was for his labor scorned."<sup>46</sup> Yet it made far more stir than Northbrooke. Another reformed dramatist, probably Anthony Munday, joined in Gosson's crusade, his essay being published, along with a translation of Salvian's attack on the ancient theatre,<sup>47</sup> under the title, *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* (i.e., retreat) *from Plays and Theatres* (1580). It is in a sincerer style than Gosson's, and harps upon the three most effective arguments of the day: (a) the sacrilege of performing plays commonly on Sunday, (b) the social dangers arising from the presence of unchaperoned women, and (c) the common Elizabethan conviction that wherever a crowd is gathered together for any other purpose than God's service, it is sure to be serving the devil. This writer treats Gosson with marked politeness, but Thomas Lodge replied to him with truculent derision in a pamphlet that has come down to us without title or date,<sup>48</sup> and again in the preface of his moral tract, *An Alarum against Usurers* (1584). Gosson, in his *Plays Confuted in Five Actions*<sup>49</sup> (entered, S. R., 1582), let a spate of alliteration and classical apologue descend upon Lodge, with much mention of an ever-busy devil in the playhouses. Each delighted in calling the other a foolish young man, and it is certain that both were right. The strife was even carried to the stage in a lost allegorical piece at the Theatre (Feb. 23, 1581-2), *The Play of Plays*, which evidently resembled Redford's *Wit and Science* in plot. The whole business looks like a peculiarly trivial "war of the theatres," except as it reveals the deep abiding sense of moral fragility out of which Puritanism grew.

That sense is much better expressed in a mellower and broader work, Philip Stubbes's *Anatomy of Abuses*<sup>50</sup> (1583), the first part of which is a long dialogue between Spudeus and Philoponus, the zealous and the industrious man. Philoponus has spent seven years in Ailgna,<sup>51</sup> "a pleasant and famous island, immured about with the sea, as it were with a wall,"<sup>52</sup> and proceeds to describe to his friend in most valuable detail the vanity and sinfulness of the islanders. The special reprehension of plays arises out of the discussion of Sabbath-breaking and leads, as in Northbrooke also and in Gosson, to condemnation of such other pagan pleasures as May-games, dancing, cards, bear-baiting, football, and the reading of evil books.

<sup>46</sup> Letter to Harvey, Oct. 16(?), 1579. See W. R. Orwen, "Spenser and Gosson," *MLN*, LII (1937), 574-576.

<sup>47</sup> *De Gubernatione Dei*, Book 6 (5th century, A.D.). *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* is reprinted by W. C. Hazlitt, *The English Drama and Stage* (1869), pp. 97-154.

<sup>48</sup> Gosson seems to suggest that it was called *Honest Excuses*; the date must be 1579 or 1580. It is reprinted, with the title "A Defence of Poetry, Music, and Stage-Plays," by D. Laing (*Shakespeare Soc.*, 1853). See W. Ringler, "The Source of Lodge's Reply to Gosson," *RES*, xv (1939), 164-71.

<sup>49</sup> Reprinted, W. C. Hazlitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-218.

<sup>50</sup> Reprinted with elaborate commentary by F. J. Furnivall (*New Shakspeare Soc.*, 1877-79). See also G. C. Taylor, "Another Renaissance Attack on the Stage," (in *Politic Discourses*, trans. by Sir E. Hoby, 1586), *PQ*, ix (1930), 78-81; and works analyzed by Chambers, *Eliz. Stage*, iv, Appendix C.

<sup>51</sup> I.e., Anglia, England (Stubbes spells his place names backwards).

<sup>52</sup> Compare *Richard II*, II. i. 46 f.

Munday

Lodge

Stubbes, The  
Anatomy of  
Abuses

Rainolds  
and Gager

Objection to the public playhouses and the vulgar actors spread in the course of time to the university stage and produced classic results in the debate at Oxford between Dr. William Gager, the Latin dramatist, and Dr. John Rainolds, one of the most eminent ascetic theologians of the age. It began in a private exchange of letters in 1592. Gager's long defense, which is a model for style and argument, has been only recently printed;<sup>53</sup> Rainolds' much longer attack was published in 1599 with the title: *Th' overthrow of Stage Plays, by the Way of Controversy Betwixt D. Gager and D. Rainoldes*. The interesting William Vaughan (1577-1641), poet, Newfoundland colonist, and devotional writer, published in 1600 *The Golden Grove, Moralized in Three Books*, in one chapter of which he vehemently and categorically denied that stage-plays should be allowed in a Christian commonwealth.<sup>54</sup>

Heywood's  
Apology  
for Actors

It was very likely the second edition of this work in 1608 that provoked Thomas Heywood's *Apology for Actors*<sup>55</sup> (1612), which is the pinnacle of all this literature. It is one of the most successful *apologias* in the language, and though it opens with a sharp rebuke of "the sundry exclamations of many seditious sectists in this age, who in the fatness and rankness of a peaceable commonwealth grow up like unsavory tufts of grass," it proceeds with an irresistible modesty and common sense. The motive of it is loyalty and it has a double dedication: to a grand old nobleman, the fourth Earl of Worcester, who had been the patron of Heywood's company in Elizabethan years, and to those whom Heywood terms "my good friends and fellows, the city actors." Heywood says that he "could willingly have committed this work to some more able than myself," but there is only one man to whom posterity would more willingly have assigned the task, and that is Shakespeare, who we know was the author's friend, and whom Heywood seems to have resembled, in personality and range of experience, more than any other writer. Heywood was not only an actor and a playwright, but also a university scholar and a gentleman. His replies to the charges against the stage utilize the learning and dialectic he had acquired at Cambridge. Thus, to the argument that Marcus Aurelius had outlawed plays he rejoins:

This Aurelius was a great and sharp reprovcr, who, because the matrons and ladies of Rome, in scorn of his person, made a play of him, in his time interdicted the use of their theatres . . . Do but peruse the ancient Roman chronicles, and you shall undoubtedly find that from the time of this precise emperor that stately city, whose lofty buildings crowned seven high hills at once and overpeered them all, straightway began to hang the head . . . Marcus Aurelius ended their mirth, which presaged that shortly after should begin their sorrow. He banished their liberty, and immediately followed their bondage.

<sup>53</sup> By K. Young, *Trans. Wisconsin Acad.*, xviii (1916). 593-638.

<sup>54</sup> 2nd. ed., 1608, ch. 66. Thomas Beard's *Theatre of God's Judgments* (1597), which also contains violent words against actors, had a second edition in 1612. "Vain, idle, wanton pamphlets," as well as plays, are assailed at great length in *Virtue's Commonwealth* (1603), by Henry Crosse (ed. Grosart, 1878, pp. 99-123).

<sup>55</sup> Reprinted, Shakespeare Soc. (1841). Facsimile, ed. R. H. Perkinson (1941: *Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints*).

However, he is not content merely to parry the attacks; the best part of his defense is the full-throated assertion of the social profits the actors' art had conferred on London. Play-acting teaches a man decorum in speech:

not to stare with his eyes, draw awry his mouth, confound his voice in the hollow of his throat, or tear his words hastily betwixt his teeth; neither to buffet his desk like a mad man, nor stand in his place like a lifeless image, demurely plodding, and without any smooth and formal motion. It instructs him to fit his phrases to his action, and his action to his phrase, and his pronunciation to them both.

The plays of London have drawn admiring visitors from all countries, and vastly improved the language:

Our English tongue, which hath been the most harsh, uneven, and broken language of the world, part Dutch, part Irish, Saxon, Scotch, Welsh, and indeed a gallimaufry of many, but perfect in none, is now by this secondary means of playing continually refined, every writer striving in himself to add a new flourish unto it; so that in process, from the most rude and unpolished tongue it is grown to a most perfect and composed language, and many excellent works and elaborate poems writ in the same, that many nations grow enamoured of our tongue, before despised.

They have spread education:

Plays have made the ignorant more apprehensive, taught the unlearned the knowledge of many famous histories, instructed such as cannot read in the discovery of all our English chronicles; and what man have you now of that weak capacity that cannot discourse of any notable thing recorded, even from William the Conqueror, nay, from the landing of Brute, until this day?

But chiefly it is the effects of drama on character that he stresses:

What English blood, seeing [seeth] the person of any bold Englishman presented, and doth not hug his fame and hunny [feel delight] at his valor, pursuing him in his enterprise with his best wishes, and as being rapt in contemplation, offers to him in his heart all prosperous performance, as if the personator were the man personated? so bewitching a thing is lively and well-spirited action that it hath power to new-mould the hearts of the spectators, and fashion them to the shape of any noble and notable attempt.

Heywood's *Apology* is full of such fine and fervid claims. He loved his art as honestly as Ben Jonson did, and he loved his fellow-actors better. Twenty years later, when William Prynne (1600-1669) compiled his enormous *Histrio-Mastix* (1633) in their dispraise, there was doubtless less to be said for either; but in 1612 dramatic art, if not in the very May-morn of its youth, was still

Ripe for exploits and mighty enterprises,

and the angry reply of one I. G., *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors* (1615), fell very flat.

## VI

### Elizabethan Comedy

#### Elizabethan Theatres

The terms *theatre*, *stage*, and *actor* had in Queen Elizabeth's time no such definite meanings as they have today.<sup>1</sup> Stage architecture and techniques were so rapidly developing that efforts to visualize a typical "Elizabethan stage" are illusory. The theatre might be a schoolroom or college hall, where students performed under the direction of their masters; it might be the social hall of one of the London legal societies (the Inns of Court), or of some great house or palace; it might be the choirboys' concert chamber, or the galleried but roofless "yard" of a carrier's inn, utilized normally for the delivery of produce from the country. When the actors traveled, it might be any place where an audience could be gathered, from a town hall to a barn. The plays mentioned in the next two chapters were acted under the most different conditions and in the most diverse places.

#### Status of Actors

It is important to recognize the relatively great significance in Shakespeare's age of what we should call amateur or semi-amateur productions, and the special disabilities under which the professional companies worked. The actor was not recognized in the reign of Elizabeth as a bona fide wage-earner, and in a London still governed by the old guild system he had no professional safeguards. He was, moreover, increasingly jeopardized by the predominant Puritan spirit in the City, which, though perhaps not very menacing in the early part of the reign,<sup>2</sup> grew strong enough to suppress acting altogether before the next century was half over. The actors

<sup>1</sup> In connection with this chapter and the next the CBEL, I. 487 ff., should be consulted. The essential reference books are W. W. Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, I (1939), Plays to 1616; and E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (4v, Oxford, 1933). A. Harbage, *Annals of English Drama, 975-1700* (Philadelphia, 1940), and H. W. Wells, *Chronological List of Extant Plays Produced in and about London, 1581-1642* (1940, a supplement to his *Elizabethan and Jacobean Playwrights*, 1939) give tentative chronological lists. J. Q. Adams, *Shakespearean Playhouses* (Boston, 1917) is the standard account of Elizabethan theatres, but may be supplemented by A. H. Thorndike, *Shakespeare's Theatre* (1916; latest impression, 1935) and by three recent studies of great importance: Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience* (1941); John C. Adams, *The Globe Playhouse, Its Design and Equipment* (Cambridge, Mass., 1942); and G. F. Reynolds, *The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theatre, 1605-1625* (1940). The long dramatic histories of A. W. Ward, F. E. Schelling, and W. Creizenach are still of value. More recent and briefer treatments include T. Brooke, *The Tudor Drama* (Boston, 1911); F. E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Playwrights* (1925); Janet Spens, *Elizabethan Drama* (1922); F. S. Boas, *An Introduction to Tudor Drama* (Oxford, 1933); G. B. Harrison, *Elizabethan Plays and Players* (1940); T. M. Parrott and R. H. Ball, *A Short View of Elizabethan Drama* (1943). The whole development of English comedy is covered by A. H. Thorndike, *English Comedy* (1929), a treatment which may be supplemented by the excellent introductions of C. M. Gayley to the first three volumes of *Representative English Comedies* (1903-1914).

<sup>2</sup> See W. Ringler, "The First Phase of the Elizabethan Attack on the Stage," *HLQ*, v (1942). 391-418.



postponed their doom by two recourses. To avoid the laws against vagabonds they described themselves, more or less fictitiously, as the private servants of some great lord or of the Queen; and to escape the unfriendly City government they built their public playhouses outside the corporate limits. The earliest of these, the Theatre and Curtain, both erected in 1576-7, were in the unsavory Shoreditch suburb north of the city wall, and were followed by the Fortune (1600) and the Red Bull (c. 1605) farther west. The Rose (1587), Swan (c. 1595), and Globe (1599), on the other hand, established themselves, like the later Hope (1614), on the south bank of the Thames, just opposite the City, but in the county of Surrey. All these, though with time they grew more spacious and expensive, followed the original innyard structure and featured a roofless auditorium offering standing room only for the rabble and seats in the roofed galleries for patrons who paid more. The chief source of information about the day by day business of an Elizabethan public playhouse is the *Diary*, or account-book, of Philip Henslowe, manager of the Rose and Fortune.<sup>3</sup>

"Public"  
Playhouses

Theatres which were able to intrude within the City proper were called by the palliative name of "private" playhouses. From the first these catered to a wealthier and smaller clientele, offering seats (and roofing) for all, elaborate music, and artificial lighting. The only such houses during Elizabeth's reign were the one used by the Paul's Boys and the two Blackfriars enterprises, of which the earlier (1576-84) was soon suppressed and the later (c. 1600) had great difficulty in opening. In Stuart times, however, the private playhouses rapidly increased, until they became the dominant theatres and passed on their particular conventions, rather than those of the "public" houses, to the Restoration and the modern stage.

"Private"  
Playhouses

It was of great importance in the development of English comedy that Plautus, and particularly Terence, had a leading place in the scheme of Renaissance education. An edition of the six comedies of Terence by Pynson (1495-97) ranks among the English incunabula; a translation of the first comedy, *Andria*, was printed along with the Latin text about 1530; and in 1533 the same dramatist was carved up to make a pedagogical implement in Nicholas Udall's *Flowers for Latin-Speaking, Selected and Gathered out of Terence and the Same Translated into English*, which was later enlarged and frequently reprinted. Alexander Nowell, the great headmaster of Westminster School (1543), required the reading of Terence "for the better learning the true Roman style," and the school regulations of 1561 insisted upon the performance of Latin plays at Christmas. In the year of Shakespeare's birth the Westminster boys produced a comedy of Terence (*Heautontimorumenos*) and one of Plautus (*Miles Gloriosus*), the latter being repeated before Queen Elizabeth, who, as well as four of her nobility,

Latin  
Comedy  
at School

<sup>3</sup> Henslowe's *Diary* is edited by W. W. Greg (2v, 1904-8) and supplemented by Henslowe *Papers* (1907). Further information is found in J. T. Murray, *English Dramatic Companies* (2v, 1910) and in several volumes of collected papers by W. J. Lawrence.



*The First  
Regular  
Comedies*

received a complimentary copy of Plautus on the occasion.<sup>4</sup> So it was elsewhere; Tudor schoolboys acted Roman comedy for the improvement of their conversational Latin and thus acquired their ideas of dramatic art. The result was an indoctrination of Plautine and Terentian method that quickly made itself apparent in English plays of academic nature.

In *Jack Juggler*, "a new interlude for children to play" (printed in 1562), the scene of the two Sosias with which Plautus's *Amphitruo* opens, has been developed into 1200 lines of purely native London farce.<sup>5</sup> This is still an interlude; but in Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* and William Stevenson's *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, both dating from about the opening of Queen Mary's reign (1553),<sup>6</sup> the Latin five-act comedy suddenly appeared, complete in all its parts and wholly domesticated. It would be hard to find another instance of such immediate acceptance of a foreign art form. In these plays the characters and setting are wholly English, the structure wholly Latin. Each observes precise unity of time and place, and is divided into five acts with rigid care, on the Renaissance principle that a new act begins when the stage is bare and a new scene when a character joins or leaves those who are in conversation. The two plays give contrasting pictures of urban and of country society. *Roister Doister*, which was probably first acted by Queen Mary's Chapel Royal or at Westminster School,<sup>7</sup> depicts middle class life in London. *Gammer Gurton* reeks with the rusticity of the sixteenth-century village; one might call it Stratford-on-Avon and gain a materially better appreciation of the world Shakespeare entered at his birth.

Both plays contain delightful songs; the "Back and side, go bare, go bare," which opens the second act of *Gammer Gurton*, is so irresistible that it has been filched times without number by producers of Shakespearean plays. Naturally, the conventional character types of the Greek and Roman city comedy are most observable in *Roister Doister*, which has a braggart soldier and a parasite, but the leading figure in that play, Dame Christian Custance, is as English as the Wife of Bath. She combines, not unengagingly, an acute sensitiveness about social proprieties and the discipline of servants with a prompt efficiency in boxing the ears of unwise suitors. In *Gammer Gurton's Needle*<sup>8</sup> the plot thickens and the action moves post-haste. Instead of one widow, we here have two, equally honest and upstanding, and still less cramped in the enjoyment of their plebeian temperaments than the city-bred Dame Custance. The causes of war also pass from the abstract to the concrete. Disembodied proprieties do not here inflame the Amazons; they fly to arms

Ralph  
Roister  
Doister

Gammer  
Gurton's  
Needle

<sup>4</sup> See E. J. L. Scott, "The Westminster Play Accounts of 1564 and 1606," *Athenaeum*, Feb. 14, 1903, p. 220; and T. H. V. Motter, *The School Drama in England* (1929).

<sup>5</sup> See above, Part I, ch. v. A closer adaptation of the *Amphitruo* has been preserved in manuscript (c. 1600) with the title, *The Birth of Hercules*: printed by the Malone Soc. (1911). It expands the Latin play considerably and adds a new servant named Dromio (cf. *The Comedy of Errors*).

<sup>6</sup> See T. W. Baldwin and M. C. Linthicum, "The Date of *Ralph Roister Doister*," *PQ*, vi (1927), 379-395. For arguments for an earlier date see the edition of the play by C. G. Child (1912), pp. 31-42.

<sup>7</sup> The most recent separate editions of *Roister Doister* are those of the Malone Soc. (1935) and G. Scheurweghs (Louvain, 1939).

<sup>8</sup> Ed. H. F. B. Brett-Smith (Oxford, 1920).

to redeem a stolen darning-needle or defend a threatened hen-roost. Blood flows, hair flies, the village curate, defender of the virtues and the peace, is cudgelled stiff and stark in pursuance of a remarkable round of duty. The fifth act is an inexpressibly joyous affair, beautifully stage-managed, as the tight-tangled plot is let out reef by reef till the quintessential moment arrives in which the eponymous hero of the piece, Gammer Gurton's Needle, quiescent in the seat of honest Hodge's breeches, brings about the final dénouement.

Nothing about this play is more likely to cause surprise, or is more really significant, than the character of the author and of the audience for whom it was written. It was composed by Master S,<sup>9</sup> M. A. of Christ's College, Cambridge (later the college of Milton), and was acted for the amusement of that demure society. Similarly, *Ralph Roister Doister* was written by an eminent clergyman and scholar, high in favor with both King Edward VI and Queen Mary, successively headmaster of the great schools of Eton and Westminster. When we compare these earliest examples of the classical tendency in English comedy with the charming interludes of John Heywood, a paradox appears. The net result of bringing into the drama the influence of pagan culture was, it would seem, to make it much more moral in the ordinary Christian sense and indescribably less cultivated or refined. To compare Heywood's wit with that of the earliest comedies is like comparing Beau Brummel with a prize-fighter; and yet, whereas Heywood's development of the so-called morality play is frankly immoral, or unmoral in high degree, the Elizabethan imitations of wicked Terence and Plautus are staggeringly righteous. Taken as a class, they are surprisingly inoffensive in their morals, and appallingly vulgar in their social tone.

*The Social  
Tone of  
Early  
Elizabethan  
Comedy*

This is less true, of course, of comic plots borrowed from Italy.<sup>10</sup> One of the earliest modern comedies was *I Suppositi* (i.e., the substitutes or changelings) by Ariosto, acted at Ferrara in 1509. It was in prose,<sup>11</sup> but followed Latin precedent in other structural respects, and was largely built up by a clever combination of plot devices from a comedy by Plautus and another by Terence.<sup>12</sup> George Gascoigne translated this into English prose as *The Supposes*, for presentation at Gray's Inn in 1566, retaining the Italian names and setting; and thus the English stage received the story and the comic figures which are found again as Lucentio, Tranio, Gremio, and the true and false Vincentio in the minor plot of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

*Comedies  
from the  
Italian*

*Gascoigne's  
Supposes*

A somewhat similar comedy is *The Bugbears*, adapted from A.-F. Grazzini's *La Spiritata* ("The girl possessed by the devil," 1561) and set in Florence. It employs rough riming verse instead of prose and follows the Italian source less closely than *The Supposes* does, but is no less careful

*The Bug-  
bears*

<sup>9</sup> Identified by Henry Bradley with William Stevenson; see C. M. Gayley, *Representative English Comedies*, I (1912), 197-202. For an opposed view see C. W. Roberts, "The Authorship of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*," *PQ*, XIX (1940), 97-113.

<sup>10</sup> See R. W. Bond, *Early Plays from the Italian* (Oxford, 1911), which contains texts of *Supposes*, *Bugbears*, and *Misogonus*.

<sup>11</sup> Ariosto later recast the play in verse (1529).

<sup>12</sup> I.e., the *Captivi* and the *Eunuchus*.

about the five-act structure. *The Bugbears* exists in a single manuscript, written, as a note on the last page says, by one John Jeffere, who may be the English adapter or merely the scribe. The date appears to be about the same as that of *The Supposes*, c. 1565, and the company for which it was intended an amateur band of schoolboys. As there is no record of printing or public performance, the fact that the chief intriguing servant is called Biondello, like a parallel character in *The Taming of the Shrew*, must be set down to coincidence. *The Bugbears* has the same type of Greco-Latin comic plot as *Supposes*: children carrying out amorous schemes with the aid of clever servants against the wills of avaricious or doting old men; but it adds a noisier and more farcical element by bringing in imaginary spirits ("bugbears") to haunt the house of the old miser, Amideus, and to be exorcised by a false "astronomer."

#### Misogonus

There is still more uproarious comedy, more variety, and more realism in another manuscript play, *Misogonus*, which mingles the prodigal son motif with Italian comedy of lost children. The one manuscript is incomplete, and both authorship and sources are doubtful, though a certain Laurentius Bariona has set his name and the date 1577 on the title-page, and a Thomas Richards has signed the prologue.<sup>13</sup> The scene is Italian and the structure classical, but the versification is rough and the general spirit of the piece derives quite as much from the English interlude as from Terence.

#### Two Italian Gentlemen

Anthony Munday's version of *Il Fedele* (1575) by Luigi Pasqualigo was acted before Queen Elizabeth and printed with the title, *Fedele and Fortunio, the Deceits in Love, or A Pleasant Comedy of Two Italian Gentlemen*, in 1585,<sup>14</sup> several years after a Latin version of the same original had been produced at St. John's, Cambridge.<sup>15</sup> To compare these three plays, respectively Neapolitan, Latin, and English, is to receive an instructive lesson in the variations which the same theme might sustain in being fitted to three different types of hearers. It would seem from Munday's treatment that the Queen's taste was for the braggadocio of Captain Crackstone, who adds malapropism to his other absurdities as *miles gloriosus*, and for lively song. Instrumental music is called for between the acts, which are unified on classic principles, as in the other plays of this group. False enchantment and horseplay add liveliness, but the comedy is essentially a love intrigue on the formula which repeats itself in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Much Ado about Nothing*: two romantic couples, brought into cross purposes by inconstancy or plotting, show how the course of true love never did run smooth, and in the end pair off as in the beginning.

The ancient foundation of the Chapel Royal, which supplied the religious

<sup>13</sup> See S. A. Tannenbaum, "The Author of *Misogonus*," in *Shaksperian Scraps* (1933), pp. 129-141.

<sup>14</sup> Entered, Stationers' Register, Nov. 12, 1584; reprinted by the Malone Society (1910) with supplement (1933). That Munday was the adapter of this play seems highly probable, but has not yet been fully proved.

<sup>15</sup> *Victoria*, by Abraham Fraunce, ed. G. C. Moore Smith (Louvain, 1906).

exercises of the court, included a body of choir boys, fixed at the number of twelve by a patent of 1526. From an early date these boys were occasionally employed in "disguisings" and other secular entertainments, and in proportion to the energy and resourcefulness of the masters who had them in charge they might be drilled to present plays. At several periods during Elizabeth's reign their prestige as an acting company was so great as to challenge that of the best adult professionals and attract the services of the leading dramatists.<sup>16</sup>

*The Children of the Chapel*

William Cornish, who was master of the Chapel Children from 1509 till 1523, produced interludes and pageants at Henry VIII's court with much apparent favor, though the texts have not survived. Cornish's successors, William Crane and Richard Bower, did something to continue the tradition; but it was not till Bower was succeeded by Richard Edwards<sup>17</sup> (1524-1566) in 1561 that a great advance was made. Edwards' only extant play, *Damon and Pythias*, acted before the Queen at Christmas, 1564, introduces several important innovations. The prologue begins, like that of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, by informing the audience that the poet has turned his back upon the customary "toying plays," i.e., interludes. It proceeds to develop the Horatian theory of decorum in character types and to define the offered play—in a new phrase which was later to become very famous—as a "tragical comedy." *Damon and Pythias* is in fact the interesting result of a blend of elements from classic comedy and tragedy with certain conventions of English farce. The dignified and edifying story, lauding the noblest Elizabethan virtue, self-sacrificing friendship, is the stuff of tragedy, as are the characters of Eubulus, the good councilor, and Dionysius, the tyrant monarch; and this quality is enforced by moral declamations that might have come out of Seneca. But the story has a happy ending and is set in a comic frame which deals with the duel of wits between Aristippus and Carisophus. There is no formal division into acts or scenes, and though the place is confined to Syracuse, the time covers a couple of months, the lapse being rather cleverly concealed by an inserted farce lampooning one of the most currently disliked types of petty swindler, the dishonest coal-dealer. The songs are excellent, as Edwards' reputation would lead one to expect; and everything in the play pleases except the style, which to a modern reader is very heavy. Even this, at a time when blank verse had not yet shown its suitability for comedy, can be justified as an experimental innovation, and it may be best to regard it as riming prose.<sup>18</sup>

*Richard Edwards*

*Damon and Pythias*

A similar tragicomic method was employed with even greater success in Edwards' *Palamon and Arcite*, presented in two parts at Christ Church when Queen Elizabeth visited Oxford in September, 1566. It was based on Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* and produced with a splendor and an effort at scenic realism hitherto unattempted, but the text is lost, except for a single

*Palamon and Arcite*

<sup>16</sup> See E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (1923) I. 213-234, II. 8-61; H. N. Hillebrand, *The Child Actors* (Urbana, 1926).

<sup>17</sup> See L. Bradner, *The Life and Poems of Richard Edwards* (New Haven, 1927).

<sup>18</sup> See Bradner, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 f.

6109  
1649

song by Emilia out of the second part.<sup>19</sup> This pair of plays, even more than *Gorboduc*, seems to have been the great dramatic triumph of the decade of the 1560's, and Edwards' death a few months later, at the early age of forty-two, was a grievous blow. He and his favored band of Chapel Children stood evidently on the brink of fine achievements; but though the records of the Revels Office<sup>20</sup> suggest sporadic efforts to dramatize romantic themes such as he had handled, fifteen years passed before another writer arose who could give any real impulse to comedy.<sup>21</sup>

John Lyly  
(1554-1606)

Early  
Elizabethan  
Culture

Lyly is an excellent illustration of the principle that the need brings forth the man.<sup>22</sup> His delicate and refined talent appeared at the precise middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign, as though in answer to a special demand, to give light to the gentiles and urbanity to those who dwelt in the shadows of boorishness. To understand his popularity and influence it is necessary to remember the social gulf which divided the Elizabethan court from that of Henry VIII. The rich and ripened civilization of the earlier age, brought back to us by Holbein's portraits of courtly gentlefolk, by stories of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and by the gracious writings of Wyatt and Surrey, More, and the witty, worldly Heywood, came to a violent end. The religious and political fluxes of Henry's last years, and the reactionary reigns of Edward VI and Mary, carried the natural inheritors of this culture, the peers and the aristocrats of the nation, into disgusted obscurity, if not actually along the manifold ways of rebellion and sudden death; and Elizabeth found herself a queen of the bourgeois and Philistines. It was the business folk of London and the country squires who made her queen and kept her so, and it was they who made the literary as well as the historical drama of her reign. Her great men, who molded the spirit of her age—the Cecils, Bacons, Raleghs, Walsinghams, Hattons,—were plain and insular Englishmen with few pretensions to breeding and none to hereditary elegance. They had (to speak broadly) the best wits in Europe and the worst manners, the constitutions of plowmen and the sense of humor that ordinarily goes with that endowment. Finesse, one easily guesses, would not be the most congenial implement for their abilities; but the ambiguous foreign policy of Elizabeth kept them for thirty years in one long battle of finesse, constantly at diplomatic swords' points with the most consummate patterns of French, Spanish, and Venetian courtliness, past masters in the art of polite dissimulation and cunning persiflage. Shakespeare,

<sup>19</sup> See H. E. Rollins, *RES*, iv (1928). 209f.

<sup>20</sup> See Chambers, *Eliz. Stage*, iv. 144-160; A. Feuillerat, *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth* (Louvain, 1908).

<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the most characteristic plays of this period, 1566-1581, were extravaganzas of chivalrous adventure, with elaborate vice-parts out of the interlude. Such are *Common Conditions* (1576), prepared for a strolling company of six, and *The History of the Two Valiant Knights, Sir Clyomon . . . and Clamydes*, printed 1599 as acted by the Queen's Players. To the same strain belongs the enormously popular but worthless *Mucedorus*, printed 1598.

<sup>22</sup> R. W. Bond, *Works* (Oxford, 1902) Vol. II, III; A. Feuillerat, *John Lyly* (Cambridge, 1910); V. M. Jeffrey, *John Lyly and the Italian Renaissance* (Paris, 1929); G. W. Knight, "Lyly," *RES*, xv (1939). 146-163; S. A. Tannenbaum, *John Lyly, A Concise Bibliography* (1940).

in an early comedy, acknowledges the fascination the blunt English felt in these brilliant creatures:

Our court, you know, is haunted  
With a refined traveler of Spain;  
A man in all the world's new fashion planted,  
That hath a mint of phrases in his brain;  
One who the music of his own vain tongue  
Doth ravish like enchanting harmony . . .  
How you delight, my lords, I know not, I;  
But, I protest, I love to hear him lie.<sup>23</sup>

If the common sense and character of the English leaders enabled them ultimately to win the campaigns, their lack of courtly civilization and social adroitness brought them many a rankling defeat in the diplomatic skirmishes. Sharp diseases, it is said, require sharp cures; and if Lyly's cure for English rusticity of speech and manner seems to us pretty drastic, no true Elizabethan shrank from kissing the rod and following his instructions to the letter. It was about 1578 that this young elegant from Magdalen College, Oxford, appeared in London with his novel of *Euphues*, the Well-bred Man, and with introductions to Lord Burghley. Encouraged by the enormous vogue of *Euphues*, Lyly carried his conquering prose into the drama in a series of seven comedies, beginning with *Campaspe* about 1581 and closing with *Mother Bombie* about 1590. The subjects of these plays vary considerably and the manner undergoes a development toward simpler and more lifelike dialogue; but through them all, as through *Euphues* also, a single purpose runs, for, like the Pardoner's in Chaucer, Lyly's theme was "always one, and ever was." Put in a sentence, his grand text, reiterated and elaborated through twelve years, was simply this: *Radix malorum est rusticitas*.

Lyly's  
Theme

For Lyly breeding begins with language, and he furnishes his countrymen with a ready-made coat of words of many colors, as *précieux* and ridiculous and yet somehow as stately and engaging as the steps of a minuet. Shakespeare has not inaccurately characterized the style:

The  
Euphuistic  
Style

Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,  
Three-pil'd hyperboles, spruce affectation,  
Figures pedantical.

Modern analysts have sifted out its various constituents: mock natural history, classical mythology, fable and anecdote, alliteration, antithesis, and the like.<sup>24</sup> Here is a full-flavored sample from the prologue of *Campaspe*:

Basil softly touched yieldeth a sweet scent, but chafed in the hand a rank savor: we fear, even so, that our labors silyly glanced on will breed some content, but examined to the proof small commendation . . . There went two nights to the begetting of Hercules. Feathers appear not on the phoenix under seven months,

<sup>23</sup> *Love's Labor's Lost*, i. i. 161 ff.; v. ii. 407 ff.

<sup>24</sup> See above, ch. III.



and the mulberry is twelve in budding; but our travails are like the hare's, who at one time bringeth forth, nourisheth, and engendreth again; or like the brood of trochilus, whose eggs in the same moment that they are laid become birds.

Lyly's  
Gentlefolk

Lyly's reform began with language, but it did not end there. There is none of his prose comedies which does not deserve the praise a modern scholar has given them: "Clean, dainty, fantastic; written with the thought constantly in mind that boys were to act them."<sup>25</sup> Most loyally he maintained the early Elizabethan tradition of moral comedy, but to moral soundness he added a delicacy which is that of the true gentleman. His figures are not gentlefolk in word alone; he delights to show them performing deeds of tenderness and magnanimity. The theme of *Campaspe* is the renunciation of Alexander the Great, who resigns his claim to the Theban captive when he discovers that she loves Apelles. The two lovesick Lincolnshire maids in *Gallathea* would do credit to a nineteenth-century finishing school by their good breeding. A typical situation is that in *Endimion*, in which the wise old man, Geron, urges Eumenides to secure the relief of his unfortunate friend rather than the happy ending of his own love-suit. Here the quaint stateliness of the words does not conceal the sincerity of this little essay on friendship.<sup>26</sup>

Lyly's Stage  
and Actors

Features of  
His Plays

Lyly's chief audience was the Queen, before whom, as the title-pages inform us, *Campaspe*, *Sapho and Phao*, *Endimion*, *Gallathea*, *Midas*, and *The Woman in the Moon* were all played. His actors were "her majesty's children," i.e., the boys of the Chapel, or the similar boy company of St. Paul's, who under the management of Sebastian Westcote (d. 1582) had acquired an equal repute. His theatres were the Queen's palaces at Greenwich (*Endimion*, *Gallathea*) or Westminster, or during two brilliant years, 1583 and 1584, the private auditorium at Blackfriars, where, under the patronage of the Earl of Oxford, Lyly was able to present his own plays by means of a combination of the Chapel and Paul's companies.<sup>27</sup> His plays are all comedies and are all classically divided, but he is essentially romantic in his plots and violates the unities of time and place when he likes. All but *The Woman in the Moon* are in prose, and all but *Mother Bombie* have their foundation in classic myth, ingeniously varied and—particularly in *Sapho and Phao*, *Endimion*, and *Midas*—given a piquant application to contemporary affairs. Yet *Mother Bombie* is really the most classic of his plays and the most stageable; by fixing the scene in contemporary Rochester and foregoing learned ornament he showed for once that he could write good Plautine comedy, just as in *The Woman in the Moon* he showed that he could compose harmonious blank verse. But these novelties in his last two plays were not sufficient to maintain his declining vogue, and this most talented dramatist was crowded off the stage about 1590 by the pentecost of genius that

<sup>25</sup> G. P. Baker, in Gayley's *Representative English Comedies*, III (1914), 425.

<sup>26</sup> III. iv. 122-141 (ed. Bond, p. 50).

<sup>27</sup> This company was often known as "Oxford's boys," and the Earl of Oxford's contemporary repute as a dramatist may rest upon their productions of Lyly's plays, which were anonymous in the earliest editions.



then appeared.<sup>28</sup> His songs have best kept his memory fresh, but even they, *His Songs* in recent times, have been denied him.<sup>29</sup>

We come now to a bad man and a surpassing poet. Of all the dramatic predecessors of Shakespeare George Peele<sup>30</sup> (1556-1596) is perhaps the only unredeemed scapegrace, and he is the only one except Marlowe to whom the great word, genius, can be seriously applied. He was a product of London streets and gutters, and, high as his imagination soared, his personal tastes, character, and fortunes do not seem ever to have risen above them. At Oxford he made a considerable reputation as scholar and poet, but his academic prowess did not much avail him after his return to London, where he appears to have been always on the edge of beggary and never far from the prospect of jail. He died at the age of forty<sup>31</sup> unwept, unhonored, and unsung; but by no means forgotten, for a dozen years later, in 1607, appeared a popular book called *The Merry Conceited Jests of George Peele*, which, it has been said, "perhaps better than any other gives a picture of the wealth and poverty, the squalor and magnificence of Elizabethan London."<sup>32</sup> Many of the swindles here ascribed to him are without doubt apocryphal, but one can hardly question the essential justice of the portrait of this Villon of the sixteenth century.

*George  
Peele*

*Peele's  
Character*

The scamp's audacity is clear enough in much of his poetry. He was an outrageous jingo in politics, a fire-eater and mouther of marvelous patriotic hyperboles. A fleet of privateers or detachment of troops for the Continent could hardly set sail without a farewell burst of minstrelsy from Peele who gushed into splendid incoherence over the necessary contemptibleness of all French and Spaniards. He turned many a relatively honest penny by impassioned addresses, pageants, and pastorals upon such occasions as the annual election of a new mayor of London, a ceremonial meeting of the Knights of the Garter, or the gathering of elderly cavaliers at a tournament or militia show. But Peele's masterpiece of impudence is the unbelievable situation with which he concludes his first play, *The Arraignment of Paris*, presented before the Queen by the Children of the Chapel. Lyly gave point to a number of his plays by introducing into the mythological story

<sup>28</sup> For an account of his last days see D. Jones, "John Lyly at St. Bartholomew's," in Sisson, *Thomas Lodge and Other Elizabethans* (1933), pp. 363-407; also B. M. Wagner, "Elizabethan Dramatists," *LTLS*, Sept. 28, 1933.

<sup>29</sup> With unimportant exceptions, the songs were not printed in the quarto editions, but only in the posthumous collection of *Six Court Comedies* (1632). Hence W. W. Greg ("The Authorship of the Songs in Lyly's Plays," *MLR*, 1 (1906), 43-52) and J. R. Moore ("The Songs in Lyly's Plays," *PMLA*, XLII (1927), 623-640) argue that they were composed later, perhaps by Dekker. Their authenticity has been more persuasively supported by W. J. Lawrence ("The Problem of Lyly's Songs," *LTLS*, Dec. 20, 1923, p. 894), G. W. Whiting ("Canary Wine and *Campaspe*," *MLN*, XLV (1930), 148-151), R. W. Bond ("Lyly's Songs," *RES*, VI (1930), 295-299 and "Addendum," *RES*, VII (1931), 442-447).

<sup>30</sup> *Works*, ed. A. H. Bullen (2v, 1888); Peele's plays have been separately reprinted by the Malone Society (1906-1913). See P. H. Cheffaud, *George Peele* (Paris, 1913); T. Larsen, "Bibliography of Writings of George Peele," *MP*, XXXII (1934), 143-156 (and other essays cited in *CBEL*, I, 527); S. A. Tannenbaum, *George Peele, A Concise Bibliography* (1940); H. M. Dowling, "The Date and Order of Peele's Plays," *N&Q*, CLXIV (1933), 164-168, 183-185.

<sup>31</sup> For the probable dates of his birth and death see B. M. Wagner, *LTLS*, Sept. 28, 1933, and K. L. Bates, *MLN*, XXXV (1920), 54.

<sup>32</sup> Sir W. Raleigh, in *Shakespeare's England* (1916), I, 18.

The  
Arraign-  
ment of  
Paris

flattering topical allusions to Queen Elizabeth and her courtiers; Peele went farther. His plot takes up the old myth of the quarrel of the three goddesses over the golden ball that is the perquisite of the fairest of all divinities. At the end he makes Diana enter to appease the strife by explaining that the ball belongs to none of the claimants, but to

a gracious nymph,  
That honors Dian for her chastity,

and who fortunately dwells near by. Immediately, with charming unanimity and fervor, the celestials cry out that the only possible candidate has been discovered, and Diana steps to the royal box and "*delivereth the ball of gold to the queen's own hands*," while the three Fates come forward with a song and yield up the symbolic distaff, spindle, and knife that typify control over earthly affairs. Even Elizabeth, now fifty years old, seems to have realized that there was less of the sublime than of the ridiculous in such a dénouement, and Master Peele does not appear to have been allowed another opportunity to manifest his appreciation.

Peele's  
Gifts

Though *The Arraignement of Paris* is quite classically divided, Peele had in general no idea of structure, no common sense or reserve. Reason, order, and consistency simply were not his; but he had in very rare degree some immortal gifts. One was the power of drawing an unearthly beauty out of words, a power that marks him as belonging to a class of poets different from Lyly, Greene, or Kyd; to the class, that is, in which we naturally place Marlowe and Shakespeare. Other gifts are more peculiarly dramatic. His three great plays have an intensity of fancy that enables him to transcend the laws of logic, and they are filled with a kind of dramatic intuition that is the strangest thing about Peele. They are as different as possible in form and subject. *The Arraignement of Paris* is a Greek pastoral, written mainly in varied lyrical measures, though the scant two hundred lines of blank verse it contains are much the loveliest that any one wrote before Marlowe. *David and Bethsabe*, which is post-Marlowe, is a tragedy from the Old Testament, nearly wholly in blank verse; and *The Old Wives' Tale* is an extravaganza of English folklore, mostly in prose.

In *The Arraignement of Paris* Peele sees a vision of pre-Homeric Greece, the simple loveliness of the golden age, where song is the natural speech of men, and the genial gods and shepherds mingle in every view. We are in a world before Homer, in comparison with which the people in the *Iliad* seem sophisticated. The theme is the Trojan shepherd Paris and the consequences of his infidelity to his sweetheart Oenone. How sweetly it is introduced as the happy lovers sit together under a tree upon Mount Ida. Paris proposes a song, and with prophetic irony Oenone replies:

There is a pretty sonnet, then; we call it "Cupid's curse":

"They that do change old love for new, pray gods they change for worse!"

*David and Bethsabe* drops us into a totally different world. It is the effete, voluptuous, Oriental world of King David and his sons, a world of overripe

luxury, of lust and crime and penitence. There are no light lyrics in this play; the one song is a prayer for the avoidance of sin, set to the sad music of the Hebrew harp. Read these two plays, and you have the gist of Arnold's distinction between Hebraism and Hellenism. And on the other hand, the *Old Wives' Tale* takes us into the nursery. The text has perhaps been badly preserved, and it contains incidental satire on Gabriel Harvey and other adult topics; but the mind behind it is that of a dreamy child who has fed full on the tales the old wives told about 1570.<sup>33</sup> This is a play which for few readers can create the necessary suspension of disbelief: it must be seen on stage.<sup>34</sup>

David and  
Bethsabe

The Old  
Wives' Tale

The amount of Greene's work in comedy can be only vaguely estimated.<sup>35</sup> It was probably much more than can now be definitely assigned to him, but the main lines of his important influence are clear. In a prosier, but more imitable, way than Peele he introduced a nostalgic, day-dreaming element and he developed variety, subordinating form to atmosphere, and packing each play with such diverse materials that plot outlines become meaningless. The formula for his best plays, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and *James IV*, would be something like this: Take a tangled love story involving rural scenes; mix with a like amount of fairy-lore or magical display; flavor with Plautine jokes, interlude devices (e.g., the Vice riding to hell on the devil's back), and classic reminiscence; color with a dash of pseudo-history; shake and serve. The fictional source for one of these plays is a prose *History of Friar Bacon*, for the other a story in Cinthio's *Ecatomiti*, but neither is more than fitfully traceable among the motley ingredients.<sup>36</sup> The love story is much the same in both, Prince Edward, Lacy, Elinor, and Margaret in one play balancing James IV, Eustace, Dorothea, and Ida in the other. In each, vicious love is repelled by the virtuous heroine, and a happy conclusion follows, in one play by the renunciation of the prince (as in Lyly's *Campaspe*), in the other by the penitence of the king.

Robert  
Greene

Friar Bacon  
and James  
IV

Greene was no less cavalier in handling his source in *Orlando Furioso*, which was played before the Queen and probably suggested by Harington's

<sup>33</sup> See S. L. C. Clapp, "Peele's Use of Folklore in *The Old Wives' Tale*," *Univ. Texas Studies in English* (1926), pp. 146-156; G. Jones, "The Intention of Peele's *Old Wives' Tale*," *Aberystwyth Studies*, vii (1925), 79-93; T. Larsen, "The Date of Peele's *Old Wives' Tale*," *MP*, xxx (1932), 23-28.

<sup>34</sup> Peele could hardly be imitated as Lyly and Greene were, but something of his delicate handling of myth, song, and atmosphere may be found in a group of masquelike plays:

(1) *The early Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune*, acted before the Queen, 1583, printed 1589; reprinted, Malone Soc., 1931.

(2) *The Maid's Metamorphosis*, acted by the Children of Paul's, printed 1600 (see S. R. Golding, "The Authorship of *The Maid's Metamorphosis*," *RES*, II (1926), 270-279).

(3) Nashe's *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, 1600 (McKerrow, *Works of Thomas Nashe*, III, 227-295).

(4) Ford and Dekker, *The Sun's Darling*, licensed 1624, printed 1656. Probably a revision of Dekker's lost *Phaeton*, which was bought for the Admiral's men, 1598, and acted at court, 1600.

<sup>35</sup> *Plays and Poems*, ed. J. C. Collins (2v, Oxford, 1905); ed. T. H. Dickinson (Mermaid Ser.); five of Greene's plays are separately reprinted in the Malone Soc. (1907-1932).

<sup>36</sup> See P. Z. Round, "Greene's Materials for *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*," *MLR*, xxi (1926), 19-23; R. Hudson, "Greene's *James IV* and Contemporary Allusions to Scotland," *PMLA*, XLVII (1932), 652-667.

Orlando  
Furioso

*The School  
of Greene*

*Greene and  
Shakespeare*

*Henry  
Porter's  
Two Angry  
Women of  
Abingdon*

translation.<sup>37</sup> It is romantic comedy, spiced with melodrama and farce, and follows Ariosto at a very great distance. The blank verse, like Greene's blank verse in general, effects such a quick *reductio ad absurdum* of Marlowe's style as to make one think it half malicious. *A Looking-Glass for London and England*, by Thomas Lodge and Greene, is a blend of scriptural history, spectacle, and contemporary social satire, and was very popular.<sup>38</sup> Greene's habit of fictionizing history spread to other plays which are either by him or of his school; e.g., *George a Greene*,<sup>39</sup> revived in 1593 by Sussex's company; *Fair Em*,<sup>40</sup> acted by Strange's men about 1590; and *The Famous Victories of Henry V*,<sup>41</sup> acted by the Queen's men before 1588. These were great standbys of the professional troupes in the years before Henslowe began his diary (February, 1592). Later examples of the species Greene created are Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber*<sup>42</sup> (c. 1594), *Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntingdon* (1598), and *Sir John Oldcastle*<sup>43</sup> (1599); and the anonymous, but delightful and long beloved *Merry Devil of Edmonton*<sup>44</sup> (c. 1603).

Greene's influence was great on Shakespeare's romantic comedies, which are based upon much the same premises and materials; e.g., the nostalgic charm of the next county (Suffolk for Greene, Gloucestershire for Shakespeare); the woodland setting and idyllic atmosphere, where evil, though present in its blackest form, is easily dispelled; the capable and high-spirited heroine, fond of disguising herself as a boy; Oberon and his fairies as factors in a human love story; and the melancholy, worldly humorist (Bohan, Jaques) as a commentator on Utopia.<sup>45</sup>

To see concretely the progress that comedy made in Elizabeth's reign, it is better to turn from Greene's romantic school to a stricter comic type and compare Henry Porter's *Two Angry Women of Abingdon*,<sup>46</sup> which was acted by the Admiral's men about 1598 and printed in 1599, with *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. They were written nearly half a century apart. Both are

<sup>37</sup> Harington's Ariosto was entered on the Stationers' Register, Feb. 26, 1591. It is not necessary to believe that Greene awaited publication of the book, the progress of which was well known at court. See M. R. Morrison, "Greene's Use of Ariosto in *Orlando Furioso*," *MLN*, XLIX (1934), 449-451.

<sup>38</sup> See C. R. Baskerville, "A Prompt Copy of *A Looking Glass for London and England*," *MP*, XXX (1932), 29-51; R. A. Law, "A Looking Glasse and the Scriptures," *Univ. Texas Studies in English* (1939), pp. 31-47.

<sup>39</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc. (1911). See H. D. Sykes, "Robert Greene and *George a Greene*," *RES*, VII (1931), 129-136.

<sup>40</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc. (1928); also in the *Shakespeare Apocrypha*, ed. T. Brooke (Oxford, 1908).

<sup>41</sup> This, as well as *George a Greene*, is included in J. Q. Adams' *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas* (1924).

<sup>42</sup> Reprinted from MS, Malone Soc. (1923). See J. W. Ashton, "Revision in Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber*," *MLN*, XLVIII (1933), 531-537.

<sup>43</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc. (1908); also in the *Shakespeare Apocrypha*. The authors were Munday, Drayton, Wilson, and Hathway.

<sup>44</sup> Another of the "Shakespeare Apocrypha"; ed. J. M. Manly in Gayley, *Representative English Comedies*, II (1913); William A. Abrams (Durham, N. C., 1942).

<sup>45</sup> See P. Reyher, "Greene et Shakespeare," *Revue anglo-américaine*, II (1924), 51-54.

<sup>46</sup> Ed. C. M. Gayley, *Representative English Comedies*, I (1912); Malone Soc. (1913). See R. E. Shear, "New Facts about Henry Porter," *PMLA*, XLII (1927), 641-655; E. H. C. Oliphant, "Who Was Henry Porter?" *PMLA*, XLIII (1928), 572-575; L. Hotson, "The Adventure of the Single Rapier," *Atlantic Monthly*, CXLVIII (1931), 26-31; J. M. Nosworthy, "Notes on Henry Porter," *MLR*, XXXV (1940), 517-521.

admirable pieces, filled with vigorous action and motivated by the suspicious fury of a pair of rustic beldames; but in Porter's play farce has broadened into comedy without becoming in any respect romantic or exotic. The social station of the characters has been raised, the literary medium refined into very competent blank verse and prose, and the fable enlarged to include a love plot and the specialized humor types of Dick Coomes and Nicholas Proverbs. In form Porter's play is a "nocturnal,"<sup>47</sup> most of the action taking place at night out of doors, in imitation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is in several places recalled, though there is here a complete absence of supernatural elements. On the other hand, *Two Angry Women of Abingdon* probably suggested the title<sup>48</sup> and some plot elements in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in which play likewise one sees what the *Gammer Gurton* species of village comedy could develop into by the year 1600. The balancing species of city, i.e., London, comedy projected in *Ralph Roister Doister* was only slightly exploited in Queen Elizabeth's reign till Chapman and Jonson began moving in that direction at the end of the century; but before those dramatists had developed their ideas, the type had reappeared in William Haughton's amusing *Englishmen for My Money, or A Woman Will Have Her Will*,<sup>49</sup> which, like Porter's *Angry Women*, is first recorded in Henslowe's Diary in 1598. It has been called the first full-length comedy of London life and holds a significant position in the development of urban realism between Udall's play and Middleton's seventeenth-century comedies of London life.

Haughton,  
Englishmen  
for My  
Money

<sup>47</sup> See W. J. Lawrence, "Shakespeare from a New Angle," *Studies* (Dublin, 1919), pp. 442-455; T. Brooke, "Elizabethan Nocturnal and Infernal Plays," *MLN*, xxxv (1920), 120-121.

<sup>48</sup> See R. B. Sharpe, *The Real War of the Theaters* (1935), p. 106. Besides payment for a non-extant second part of the *Two Angry Women*, Porter received an advance from Henslowe on a play to be called *Two Merry Women of Abingdon* (Feb. 28, 1599), which his death at the hands of John Day (June 7 following) must have interfered with.

<sup>49</sup> See the edition of A. C. Baugh (Philadelphia, 1917).

## VII

### Elizabethan Tragedy

Though tragic narrative, as illustrated in the *Fall of Princes* and *Mirror for Magistrates*, had a great hold on readers, there was hardly any tradition of tragedy on the English stage when Elizabeth came to the throne.<sup>1</sup> Thus, although Seneca was acted at schools and original tragedies in Latin were produced at the universities—several of which, e.g., Grimald's *Archipropheta* (1547), have great merit—there appears to have been no popular interest in English tragedy till after 1580. Up to that time such tragedies as appeared in the vernacular were exotics, quite unlike in that respect to the early comedies. They could be produced only before élite groups such as the Inns of Court, and, with their emphasis upon musical and spectacular adornment, had somewhat the same limited appeal that grand opera has today.

*Influence  
of Seneca*

Early Elizabethan tragedy is Senecan tragedy.<sup>2</sup> The fact that Lady Lumley made a prose translation of Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, which remained in manuscript till 1909,<sup>3</sup> and that Peele at Oxford translated either the same play or its sequel into English verse argues no direct contact between the English stage and the art of Greece. Nor is it likely that the tragic implications of medieval nondramatic writings, lately well analyzed by Professor Farnham, would have found outlet in the theatres if the remarkable interest in Seneca between 1559 and 1581 had not prepared a channel for it. During these years the entire canon of ten tragedies ascribed to Seneca was translated by different hands, and in 1581 they were published together in an impressive volume.

*The  
Thyestes*

The quality of Seneca's plays may be indicated by a digest of his *Thyestes* which had been printed in Jasper Heywood's translation in 1560, and which perhaps influenced the structure of English tragedy more than any other. If

<sup>1</sup> Consult for the general background, in addition to works listed at the head of the previous chapter: A. H. Thorndike, *Tragedy* (1908); M. C. Bradbrook, *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1935); Willard Farnham, *The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Berkeley, 1936); Theodore Spencer, *Death and Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936); L. L. Schücking, *The Baroque Character of the Elizabethan Tragic Hero* (British Academy Shakespeare Lecture, 1938); Hardin Craig, "The Shackling of Accidents, a Study of Elizabethan Tragedy," *PQ*, xix (1940), 1-19; F. T. Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1578-1642* (Princeton, 1940). E. M. W. Tillyard in *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1943) gives a brief and lucid sketch of the philosophical background of Elizabethan serious thinking.

<sup>2</sup> See J. W. Cunliffe, *Early English Classical Tragedies* (Oxford, 1912); F. L. Lucas, *Seneca and Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1922). The best critical treatment of Seneca's plays is in C. W. Mendell, *Our Seneca* (New Haven, 1941). Howard Baker, *Induction to Tragedy* (Baton Rouge, 1939), doubts the extent of Seneca's influence.

<sup>3</sup> Printed in that year by the Malone Soc.



one ignores the choral chants that divide the "acts," and are Seneca's finest poetical contribution, the content of the play is simply this:

Act. I. Dialogue between the ghost of Tantalus and a fury, telling of the curse upon the house of Atreus.

Act II. Atreus announces to an attendant his intended vengeance upon his brother Thyestes.

Act III. Thyestes and his three sons return from banishment at the invitation of Atreus. Thyestes has lost his previous sense of security. He is greeted by Atreus with a false show of love.

Act IV. A messenger informs the chorus of the sacrifice of Thyestes' sons and the unnatural feast at which their father has been fed upon their bodies. Darkness falls at mid-day.

Act V. Atreus discloses to Thyestes that he has consumed his sons.

There is no final chorus or further act of violence. The play ends with the two men discussing the situation in a lurid quiet.

The earliest English tragedy was written by two members of Parliament *Sackville and Norton*, and presented before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall, January 18, 1562, by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple. In the first edition (1565) it is called the *Tragedy of Gorboduc*; in the second (c. 1570), which does not materially differ, the *Tragedy of Ferrex and Porrex*. The first three acts are said to be the work of Thomas Norton (1532-1584) and the last two of Thomas Sackville (1536-1608), whose notable contribution to the *Mirror for Magistrates* belongs to the same year as the play; and the division is borne out by stylistic evidence.\* Both writers employ an admirable blank verse, not before attempted in a drama, and for the choral speeches, which in Senecan fashion separate the acts, they use the six-line stanza (*ababcc*) with occasional variation. There is a heavy embellishment of dumb-shows after the Italian style, and of atmospheric music by violins, cornets, flutes, hautboys, and drums successively. The plot is from a source congenial enough to an author of the *Mirror*, i.e., the ancient history of Britain; and the play is itself a mirror for magistrates, indeed a special warning piece for the young Queen against the dangers of sedition and divided sovereignty. To get this effect *Gorboduc* renounces the classic unities and presents a fifth act which is a dramatic irrelevance, since the important characters are already dead. Politically, the last act is far from irrelevant, for it shows a nightmarish picture of ignorant armies clashing and selfish leaders advancing their claims through fifty years of anarchy. The poetry has here the dark grandeur of Sackville's *Induction*, and the play ends with two great, and greatly anachronistic, orations—respectively sixty-five and a hundred lines in length—in praise of parliamentary government.

It may be assumed that the example of *Gorboduc* inspired the sister society *Jocasta* of Gray's Inn to produce *Jocasta* four years later (1566). This claims to be translated from Euripides (*Phoenissae*), but like Gascoigne's *Supposes* is

\* See J. E. Gillet, "The Authorship of *Gorboduc*," *MLN*, xxxi (1916). 377-378; S. A. Small, "The Political Import of the Norton Half of *Gorboduc*," *PMLA*, xlv (1931). 641-646; S. R. Wilson, "*Gorboduc* and the Theory of Tyrannicide," *MLR*, xxxiv (1939). 355-366.



borrowed from the Italian, i.e., from Lodovico Dolce's *Giocasta*, which rather remotely followed a Latin translation of the Greek. It has the five-act division of Senecan drama, acts one and four being signed by F. Kinwelmarsh, the others by G. Gascoigne. The dumb-shows are even more elaborate than in *Gorboduc*, the blank verse a good deal less harmonious, and the chorus favors the rime royal instead of the six-line stanza.<sup>5</sup> The spectators of this play supped full with horrors, but they were edified also by abundant moral clichés to which the printer called attention by marginal notes and inverted commas.

Gismond of  
Salerne

The Inner Temple replied the next year (1567-8) with a tragedy out of Boccaccio, *Gismond of Salerne in Love*, written in five acts by five different gentlemen, one of whom was Christopher Hatton, later Lord Chancellor, and another Robert Wilmot.<sup>6</sup> It was acted before the Queen at Greenwich.<sup>7</sup> The five authors have well assimilated their styles and produced a very Senecan, though romantic, play. Gismond's lover is raised in the social scale to appease Aristotelean critics: from a varlet he becomes an earl. The unities are all respected, and pagan coloring is provided by the introduction of Cupid and Megaera. The chorus, which, as in *Gorboduc* and *Jocasta*, consists of four persons, is not metrically set off from the other speakers. In the original version the entire play uses alternate rime with few deviations; but years later (1591) Wilmot gave himself the pains of recasting most of it as blank verse, adding the dumb-show descriptions, increasing the realistic stage-effects, and changing the title to *The Tragedy of Tancred and Gismund*.<sup>8</sup>

The Mis-  
fortunes of  
Arthur

This would indicate that such taste as there was for courtly Senecan tragedy did not alter very much in a quarter century; and the same thing is shown in the *Misfortunes of Arthur*, which the Gray's Inn gentlemen acted before the Queen at Greenwich on February 28, 1588. Francis Bacon had a hand in it, and Thomas Hughes seems to have been the chief author. Six others assisted, but they made no improvement upon *Gorboduc*. The blank verse is less good, the dumb-shows less ingenious, and the choral interludes duller. The dependence on Seneca is a good deal closer, both in the number of borrowed lines and in structure. Indeed, the tale of Arthur is here not much more than a blend of the Thyestes and Oedipus stories. One might have expected more English application in the year after Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded and while the Spanish Armada was preparing to sail.<sup>9</sup> It was still true that Senecan tragedy could be produced only when it could draw upon the amateur ambitions of the Inns of Court and count on the Queen's Palace for a theatre.

<sup>5</sup> The last chorus is a sonnet, similar in form to the one that begins *Romeo and Juliet*.

<sup>6</sup> It is probable that the Inner Temple had previously produced an Italianate tragedy on the story of Romeo and Juliet at Christmas, 1561, for Arthur Brooke mentions such a play in his preface to *Romeus and Juliet* (1562). See Cunliffe, *op. cit.*, p. lxxxvii.

<sup>7</sup> See "Sonnet of the Queen's Maids," Cunliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>8</sup> This text is reprinted, Malone Soc. (1915). See D. Klein, "According to the Decorum of These Daics," *PMLA*, xxxiii (1918). 244-268; John Murray, "*Tancred and Gismund*," *RES*, xiv (1938). 385-395.

<sup>9</sup> See E. H. Waller, "A Possible Interpretation of *The Misfortunes of Arthur*," *JEGP*, xxiv (1925). 219-245.

It was Thomas Kyd<sup>10</sup> (1558-1594), and a little after him the subtler, nobler Thomas Marlowe, who succeeded around 1585<sup>11</sup> in producing an English adaptation of Latin tragedy that not only gained the approval of the people as a whole, but aroused an excited enthusiasm such as no other productions of the English theatre have quite equaled. Kyd was no poet, though he can write tolerable blank verse, but as a deviser of stage tricks and a master of the art of giving his audiences the sort of thrills that will most powerfully agitate their spines he has had very few superiors. In his most famous play, *The Spanish Tragedy*, he takes as a foundation three conventional devices which the stilted earlier writers had borrowed from Seneca. One was the ghost, another the theme of revenge for the murder of a relative (Kyd makes it the revenge of old Hieronimo for the murder of his son), and the third was a liberal use of stage declamation and soliloquy. These he proceeded to aerate and enliven by inventing a whole bagful of novel applications. We can list only the most striking:

Thomas  
Kyd

The Span-  
ish Tragedy

1. He discards the antique story taken from classic mythology or legendary British history, and gives his spectators a piping hot play of modern love and war. His setting is Spain, a country quite uniquely interesting to Kyd's countrymen at this time. His plot is imaginary, but it is supposed to arise out of the consequences of the battle of Alcantara, fought as recently as 1580.

2. The Elizabethans liked complexity in their stories, and the Senecan plays had been unbearably monotonous in plot. Kyd evolves a perfect wilderness of subplots, with enough hair-raising tricks and turns to make the fortune of a detective novelist.

3. The Elizabethans liked queer people, and the characters of the earlier tragedies, heroes and villains alike, had a distressing tendency to talk like members of Parliament. Kyd gives his characters lurid psychological twists of mind. Hieronimo, the hero, is obscurely mad; Lorenzo, his antagonist, is an embodiment of Machiavellian cunning and ruthlessness; Viluppo is a blue-print for all the heavy villains of nineteenth-century melodrama; Bel-Imperia is that ever new and dreaded portent, the "new" woman, who flouts the mores with a lethal charm.

4. Kyd invents stage business in unbelievable quantities. The Senecan play was notoriously weak in this respect, most of the interesting things taking place behind the scenes and being reported to the audience in a communiqué by a professional bore called the *nuntius* or messenger. The *nuntius* finds no place with Kyd. Of murders and suicides on the stage *The Spanish Tragedy* offers eight, cleverly spaced and diversified, besides the spectacle of a public hanging, the running lunatic of an elderly gentlewoman, the biting out of a gentleman's tongue, and other devices to prevent tedious-

<sup>10</sup> F. S. Boas, *The Works of Thomas Kyd* (Oxford, 1901); C. Crawford, *A Concordance to the Works of Thomas Kyd* (Louvain, 1906-10); J. de Smet, *Thomas Kyd, l'homme, l'œuvre, le milieu* (Brussels, 1925); P. W. Biesterfeldt, *Die dramatische Technik Thomas Kyds* (Halle, 1936).

<sup>11</sup> See T. W. Baldwin, "On the Chronology of Thomas Kyd's Works," *MLN*, XL (1925), 343-349; and "Thomas Kyd's Early Company Connections," *PQ*, VI (1927), 311-313.

ness. Kyd devised the arrangement of the play within the play, which Shakespeare found so useful; and in two separate scenes of the *Spanish Tragedy*<sup>12</sup> he gets a novel three-ring-circus effect by having certain characters discuss their intimate affairs while others look on from without, and Revenge and Andrea gaze down upon the whole—the spectators, of course, diverting themselves with the emotions of all three groups at once.

Finally, Kyd invented a ranting style of verse admirably fitted to the robustious personality of Edward Alleyn and to the acoustics of an open-air theatre. It drew the very souls out of the groundlings and became as popular with the apprentices of London as Euphuism was with the courtly classes:

O eyes, no eyes, but fountains fraught with tears!  
O life, no life, but lively form of death!

Dozens of such morsels of Kydian phrase were bawled about the streets and quoted in popular literature for fifty years. Naturally, the play made the fortunes of the actors. Long after Kyd's unhappy death it was being revised and expanded and revised again:<sup>13</sup> as a stage play it simply would not die, though all the men of taste condemned it. At least ten printed editions are known before 1634, and some have disappeared. We may imagine that many of the plain people of London never enjoyed a more perfect moment than when they had got themselves standing room in Henslowe's theatre and were wafted into Elysium by the famous opening words of Don Andrea's ghost:

When this eternal substance of my soul  
Did live imprisoned in my wanton flesh . . .  
I was a courtier in the Spanish court.

#### *Other Plays by Kyd*

The rest of Kyd's short life seems to have been mainly spent in exploiting the success of *The Spanish Tragedy*. There was a now lost *Spanish Comedy* or *Don Horatio*, that was being produced by Henslowe in 1592. This was probably by Kyd and may have had a connection with *The First Part of Jeronimo* (1605) by a later hand, which gives the antecedent history and explains how Andrea came to be a ghost. The latter is a flat play, but was enough in demand in 1604 to cause a quarrel between Shakespeare's company and the Children of the Revels over the stage rights. In *Soliman and Perseda* Kyd has expanded into a five-act tragedy the story he had used for the inserted play which brings the *Spanish Tragedy* to its catastrophe, adding an induction-choral framework and a braggart soldier, Basilisco, whom Shakespeare appears to have found amusing.<sup>14</sup> The little we know of the lost play of

<sup>12</sup> II. iv., IV. iv.

<sup>13</sup> On the vexed subject of the extraordinary additions (not by Kyd) which first appeared in the quarto of 1602, see the introduction to the Malone Soc. edition of this text; the Oxford *Jonson*, II. 238-241; H. W. Crundell, *N&Q*, CLXIV (1933). 147-149, CLXVI (1935). 246; L. L. Schücking, *Die Zusätze zur Spanish Tragedy* (Leipzig, 1938) and *LTLS*, June 12, 19, 26, July 17, 1937 (pp. 442, 464, 480, 528).

<sup>14</sup> See *King John* I. i. 244. Compare also *Soliman and Perseda* I. iii. 51 f. and *Merchant of Venice* II. i. 25 f., and see S. C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose* (1937), p. 254.

*Hamlet* which preceded Shakespeare's indicates that it was Kyd's work:<sup>15</sup> a "Danish tragedy" intentionally conceived as a sort of obverse of the *Spanish Tragedy*, and marked by the same faults and showy brilliances as the earlier play. Similarities remain even when Kyd's extant play is compared with Shakespeare's. Each has an amiable Horatio, whose name sounds somewhat strangely in Denmark. One concerns a father's vengeance and the other a son's; in each case justice is retarded by the mental state of the avenger, and questions arise of internal vs. external difficulties. In each there is a ghost returned from the dead to spur revenge, a lady driven mad, and a play within the play to forward the avenger's purpose. Each, in the measure of the author's ability, highlights soliloquy, and blends a profound Senecan melancholy with the frankest sensationalism.

*The Old  
Hamlet*

Paradoxically enough, Kyd appears also as one of the earliest apostles of the French school of Senecan tragedy fathered by Robert Garnier<sup>16</sup> (1534-1590). Garnier had carried to a very high point a conception of drama quite antipodal to that of the *Spanish Tragedy*: in it the lyric and reflective beauties of Seneca were delicately enhanced and all the brutality of plot purged away. In the year of Garnier's death the Countess of Pembroke translated his *Marc-Antoine* into accurate but dull English blank verse. This was printed in 1592 and two years later Kyd joined the movement with his *Cornelia*, translated from another of Garnier's plays and dedicated to the Countess of Sussex. A quieter drama could hardly be imagined. Act I consists of a single speech by Cicero (158 lines) and nine stanzas of lamentation on the miseries of civil war by the chorus. In Act II Cicero talks with Cornelia, the sorrowing widow of Pompey the Great, dissuading her from suicide, and the chorus sings of the mutability of human affairs. In Act III Cornelia talks with the chorus and with Pompey's servant Philip, and Cicero makes another philosophical oration. In Act IV Cassius and Decimus Brutus discourse in one scene, Caesar and Mark Antony in another. In Act V a messenger arrives to inform Cornelia that her father, Scipio, has been forced to slay himself. Cornelia makes it clear that the times are very bad, but that she must live, "(though life she hateth)," to make the tombs and mourn upon the hearses of her illustrious dead.

*French  
Seneca*

*Kyd's  
Cornelia*

Nothing was less suited to Kyd's peculiar talents than this type of closet drama, to which he can hardly have been drawn by anything except the hope of recommending himself to its influential patronesses. The thing fitted the feminine nature of Samuel Daniel much better, and the latter's *Cleopatra*, an original play on Garnier's formula, is the best work of the school. It first appeared in the same year as Kyd's *Cornelia* (1594), with a flattering inscription to Lady Pembroke, but was much revised later. Daniel employs riming verse (mainly quatrains) in the dialogue; his choruses are as charming as are Garnier's, and his lack of action as complete. The first act consists of a

*Daniel's  
Cleopatra*

<sup>15</sup> See C. M. Lewis, *The Genesis of Hamlet* (1907); H. D. Gray, "Reconstruction of a Lost Play," *PQ*, VII (1928), 254-274.

<sup>16</sup> See A. M. Witherspoon, *The Influence of Robert Garnier on Elizabethan Drama* (New Haven, 1924).

single long monologue by Cleopatra (196 lines), with comment by chorus, and the catastrophe is related by the *nuntius* in Act v at still greater length. Daniel's source is North's Plutarch (Life of Antony), from which he lifts some of the same purple patches that Shakespeare later wove into his very different fabric. In the edition of 1607, which was the seventh to appear, *Cleopatra* has been recast into something more closely resembling the Anglo-Saxon conception of a play. The changes are probably due to the influence of Daniel's second Plutarchan play, *Philotas* (1605), which centers on a trial for high treason and has for its hero a vain and foolish soldier-favorite of Alexander the Great, who (though Daniel denied it)<sup>17</sup> greatly resembles the unfortunate Earl of Essex. This play, unlike the original *Cleopatra*, was intended for the actual stage and has more animation, though it is still questionable whether actors could have learned some of the long speeches or auditors endured them. The chorus, *nuntius*, and riming verse continue to be characteristic features.

Samuel Brandon's *Tragicomedy of the Virtuous Octavia*<sup>18</sup> (1598) imitates the *Cleopatra* of Daniel in metre, but does not approach it in excellence. It likewise follows North's version of the Life of Antony, but Antony does not himself appear, nor does Cleopatra. Antony's virtuous and forsaken wife is almost the only important figure in a play which even more than *Cornelia* and *Cleopatra* emphasizes the special distaff interest of this school. Brandon appended a pair of Ovidian epistles, from Octavia to Antony and from Antony to Octavia, written like the choruses of his play in a lax ballad metre. Another imitator of Daniel was a lady of rank, Elizabeth, the wife of Sir Henry Cary and mother of the famous Lord Falkland of the civil wars. Her tragedy of *Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry*,<sup>19</sup> printed in 1613, may be the earliest play composed (as distinguished from translated) by an English-woman. She took out of Josephus's history of the Jews one of the great stories of the world,<sup>20</sup> and by setting the day of action just after the battle of Actium brought it into connection with the familiar Antony and Cleopatra material. She attempts to write with cautious classic elegance, but this style is not suited to the amount of romantic excitement she wished to introduce.

On the accession of James I Daniel became a favorite at court and gave up tragedy for masques and pastoral comedies of no great importance.<sup>21</sup> The chief Jacobean continuators of the Garnier type of tragedy were two grave philosophical poets, Sidney's friend, Fulke Greville<sup>22</sup> and King James's Scottish friend, Sir William Alexander<sup>23</sup> (c. 1567-1640). The latter's four

<sup>17</sup> In his "apology" for *Philotas* Daniel asserts that three acts of the play had been written before the Essex uprising of 1601.

<sup>18</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc., 1910.

<sup>19</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc., 1914.

<sup>20</sup> See M. J. Valency, *The Tragedies of Herod and Mariamne* (1940).

<sup>21</sup> I.e., *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* (1604); *The Queen's Arcadia* (1605); *Tethys' Festival* (1610); *Hymen's Triumph* (1615).

<sup>22</sup> See below, Part III, ch. vi.

<sup>23</sup> See L. E. Kastner and H. B. Charlton, *Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling: the Dramatic Works* (Manchester, 1921) which has a very notable introduction; T. H. McGrail, *Sir William Alexander, First Earl of Stirling* (Edinburgh, 1940).



*Monarchic Tragedies* (1603-1607) deal with four great crises of the ancient world, beginning with the *Tragedy of Croesus* and ending with that of Julius Caesar. They employ the chorus and the alternately riming verse which had become conventional in this sort of drama. Occasionally they introduce a ghost or a classical goddess to open the play, but they pay no close attention to the unities and are overlong. They justly challenge our respectful consideration, but more by the political wisdom they contain than by any dramatic pleasure they impart.

Sir Wm.  
*Alexander*,  
Monarchic  
Tragedies

The first part of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* created in all sorts of writers a desire to emulate its success, and at the same time confused their notions of tragedy. One of the feeblest imitations is *The Wars of Cyrus*, printed in 1594 as played by the Children of the Chapel, though the date of such performance is a mystery. It is a happy romantic narrative, to which gravity is added by two deaths at the end. The ultimate source is Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, to which a very popular tale in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*<sup>24</sup> had given currency. One of the most fulsome imitations of *Tamburlaine* is *The Comical History of Alphonsus, King of Aragon*, published in 1599 as by "R. G." If Greene wrote it, it was Greene at his worst. Nothing comical appears except the stylistic excess and the happy ending, in which the vainglorious hero, after conquering the Great Turk and other sovereigns, marries his disdainful captive. There is a good deal of killing on the stage and a great deal of magic. Venus is the introducer of each act, and the story is presented as the work of Calliope, the muse of epic poetry, rather than of the tragic muse, Melpomene.

Popular  
English  
Tragedy

*The Battle of Alcazar*, surviving only in a bad text (1594), bears no author's name, but can be accepted as the work of Peele, whose chaotic notions of structure and occasional grandeurs of style<sup>25</sup> are both apparent. It was evidently admired in its day and was rather frequently quoted. The *Spanish Tragedy* may have suggested the idea of dramatizing the battle of Alcazar (1578) and the death of Sebastian of Portugal, but *Tamburlaine*, which is mentioned in the text, no doubt inspired the hazy background of warring Moorish kings. The chief villain is the terrible Negro, Muly Mahamet, who has a beloved wife (Calipolis) and son; and they in turn laid down the specifications for Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*. Peele's spirit was too eclectic and impatient for Senecan restraint, but he keeps a hint of the pseudo-Roman method in the presenter who introduces each act and in the three ghosts and numerous dumb-shows.<sup>26</sup>

The Battle  
of Alcazar

<sup>24</sup> No. xi, "King Cyrus and the Lady Panthea." The play is reproduced by J. S. Farmer, *Tudor Facsimile Texts* (1911); and has been carefully edited by J. P. Brawner (Urbana, 1942).

<sup>25</sup> E.g., the praise of Queen Elizabeth, Malone Soc. ed., lines 724 ff., and the last speech of Stukeley, lines 1454 ff.

<sup>26</sup> A somewhat similar method and theme appear in *Alarum for London, or the Siege of Antwerp* (1602), acted by Shakespeare's company and entered for publication in 1600. It is based on a pamphlet by Gascoigne and treats the sack of Antwerp by the Spaniards in 1576, with emphasis on the heroic deeds and death of two English officers. Reprinted, Malone Soc., 1913.

English  
Chronicle  
Plays

Turkish history of the early sixteenth century is weirdly dramatized in *Selimus*<sup>27</sup> (1594), written by some one who fancied himself as a poet but had no notion of playmaking. There is evidence connecting this piece with Greene, but it is not strong enough to overcome the incredulity produced by the general nature of the work.<sup>28</sup> *Selimus* is clearly a derivative of *Tamburlaine* and has some close parallels with the pseudo-Shakespearean *Lochrine* (1595), a sultry tragedy of love and war in ancient Britain, in which Ate and a dumb-show introduce each act and various ghosts enliven the proceedings.

Lodge's *Wounds of Civil War*<sup>29</sup> (1594) carries the Tamburlaine motif into Roman history, presenting Sulla as a young conqueror who rides in triumph, but blending this conception, it would seem, with reminiscence of the treatment of war in the *Henry VI* plays, which perhaps first opened the eyes of hard-pressed playwrights to the wealth of gory incident in the English chronicles.<sup>30</sup> Henslowe's Diary shows how largely such material was used in plays which have not survived. Existing tragedies of this kind include the *Troublesome Reign of John King of England*<sup>31</sup> (1591), in two parts, and the effective *True Tragedy of Richard III*<sup>32</sup> (1594), besides plays of less clearly tragic import, such as Peele's *Edward I*<sup>33</sup> (1593) and the anonymous *Edward III*<sup>34</sup> (1596), in which there are some good reasons for seeing Shakespeare's hand. It was natural and easy to frame tragedies also out of the lives of well known English statesmen; e.g., the manuscript plays of "Woodstock" or Thomas, Duke of Gloucester<sup>35</sup> and of Sir Thomas More;<sup>36</sup> *Sir John Oldcastle*<sup>37</sup> (1600), *Thomas Lord Cromwell*<sup>38</sup> (1602); and even, on a lower social level, *Jack Straw*<sup>39</sup> (1593) and *Captain Thomas Stukeley*<sup>40</sup> (1605).

Bourgeois  
Tragedy

The interest in chronicle history may be credited also with shaping a bourgeois tragedy which was one of the most vital Elizabethan types. Forecasts of this are perhaps found in such interlude developments as John Phillip's *Patient and Meek Grissill*<sup>41</sup> (c. 1565), Thomas Garter's *Virtuous*

<sup>27</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc., 1909.

<sup>28</sup> There is a great deal of elaborate stanzaic verse and emphasis on the favorite themes of abdication and mutilation. *Tamburlaine* is directly alluded to in lines 2345 and 2439.

<sup>29</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc., 1910.

<sup>30</sup> See F. E. Schelling, *The English Chronicle Play* (1902).

<sup>31</sup> Reprinted in "Shakespeare Classics," ed. F. J. Furnivall and J. Munro (1913); also in the Furness Variorum Shakespeare *King John* (1919).

<sup>32</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc., 1929.

<sup>33</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc., 1911.

<sup>34</sup> Reprinted, *Shakespeare Apocrypha* (1908).

<sup>35</sup> Malone Soc., 1929.

<sup>36</sup> On the question of Shakespeare's part in this play see the edition by W. W. Greg (Malone Soc., 1911), Sir E. M. Thompson, *Shakespeare's Handwriting* (Oxford, 1916), A. W. Pollard, et al., *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of Sir Thomas More* (Cambridge, 1923), E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare* (2v, Oxford, 1930), I. 499-515, and R. W. Chambers, "Some Sequences or Thought in Shakespeare and in the 147 Lines of *Sir Thomas More*," *MLR*, xxvi (1931), 251-280.

<sup>37</sup> Malone Soc., 1908; *Shakespeare Apocrypha* (1908).

<sup>38</sup> *Shakespeare Apocrypha* (1908).

<sup>39</sup> *Tudor Facsimile Texts*, ed. J. S. Farmer (1911).

<sup>40</sup> *Tudor Facsimile Texts*, ed. J. S. Farmer (1911); J. Q. Adams, "Captaine Thomas Stukeley," *JEGP*, xv (1916), 1-23.

<sup>41</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc., 1909.



and *Godly Susanna*<sup>42</sup> (1578), and particularly in George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*<sup>43</sup> (1578), which handles the same theme as Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. In all these plays there are "happy" endings and rough clownage, but the main problem is domestic and deeply serious. The first unmitigated tragedy of ordinary life is *Arden of Feversham*<sup>44</sup> (1592) dramatized from Holinshed's account of the murder of a leading citizen of Feversham in Kent in 1551. The play is an *Agamemnon* of middle-class English life, very faultily constructed, but extremely vivid in its picture of manners and customs. Alice Arden, the best drawn character, is not quite unworthy to be mentioned with Clytemnestra, and Mosby, her lover, fairly fills the rôle of Aegisthus; but there is no thought of classic parallels in this bleak transcript of sordid acts and feelings. The catastrophe is not artistically developed, but the situations evoke at times a very striking poetry and at other times unusually graphic vignettes of Tudor life. The only other extant play of the type comparable with *Arden* is *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), based upon a similar *crime passionnel*.<sup>45</sup> It was acted by Shakespeare's company, and probably at the new Globe theatre which was opened in the spring or summer of 1599. The unknown author was master of a remarkable plain and easy style, both in blank verse and prose. He justly calls his work a "true and home-born tragedy": it leaves a rather horribly convincing impression of the London middle-class, smug, purse-proud, and sensual, steadily pushing themselves up amid brutal crime and yet more brutal punishment.

Arden of  
Feversham

Of the same nature is the realistic portion of Robert Yarrington's (?) *Two Lamentable Tragedies*<sup>46</sup> (1601, but written earlier), dealing with the murder of another London merchant in 1594; and the type persisted as late as 1624 in a lost work, *The Late Murder in Whitechapel*,<sup>47</sup> in which four very considerable dramatists—Dekker, Rowley, Ford, and Webster—combined their talents. *Page of Plymouth*, for which Henslowe paid Dekker and Jonson in 1599, depicted an adulterous murder in the west, perpetrated in 1591; and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*<sup>48</sup> (1608), "written by W. Shakespeare," as the title-page alleged, and undoubtedly acted by his company at the Globe, deals with a northern crime of 1605. Shakespeare can hardly be held responsible for much of the language of this ephemeral piece, but it seems to have

<sup>42</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc., 1937.

<sup>43</sup> *Tudor Facsimile Texts*, ed. J. S. Farmer (1910). Whetstone's play is in two parts, like *Tamburlaine*, and was published by the same stationer, Richard Jones, who entered both pairs of plays on the Stationers' Register with the identical description, "two comical discourses." The title-page of *Tamburlaine* changed this to "two tragical discourses."

<sup>44</sup> Reprinted, *Shakespeare Apocrypha*. See H. D. Sykes, *Sidelights on Shakespeare* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1919), pp. 48-76 (arguing for Kyd's authorship).

<sup>45</sup> J. S. Farmer, *Tudor Facsimile Texts* (1912). The subject is the murder of George Saunders of London in 1573. See J. Q. Adams, "The Authorship of *A Warning for Fair Women*," *PMLA*, xxviii (1913), 594-620.

<sup>46</sup> Ed. J. S. Farmer, *Tudor Facsimile Texts*, 1913. R. A. Law, "Yarrington's *Two Lamentable Tragedies*," *MLR*, v (1910), 167-177, and the introduction to William Haughton's *Englishmen for My Money*, ed. A. C. Baugh (Phila., 1917), pp. 48-60.

<sup>47</sup> See C. J. Sisson, *Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age* (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 80-124.

<sup>48</sup> Reprinted, *Shakespeare Apocrypha* (1908).

provided him with an effective episode in *King Lear*,<sup>49</sup> and his great early Jacobean tragedies—*Othello*, *Lear*, *Macbeth*—are, for one thing, transmutations of the Elizabethan tragedy of domestic crime.

There was also a return at about the time of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1599) and Jonson's *Sejanus* (1603) to the imperial Roman subjects by writers unconnected with the Senecan school. The fine play, *Caesar's Revenge*<sup>50</sup> (1606), "privately acted by the students of Trinity College in Oxford," has Discord to introduce each act and makes a good deal of Caesar's ghost; but it lacks the chorus, which the Senecans so prized, and instead of restricting the action to a day, covers the whole six years from Pharsalia to Philippi. In the next year (1607) was printed *The Tragical Life and Death of Claudius Tiberius Nero*<sup>51</sup> (i.e., the emperor Tiberius), likewise by a young man of one of the universities. It is very long and very violent, and deals with the same historical period as Jonson's *Sejanus*. Equally anonymous, and of greater merit, is *The Tragedy of Nero* (i.e., the emperor Nero), which was not printed till 1624.<sup>52</sup>

The scene was transferred to Germany and the horror intensified in two hectic revenge plays: Henry Chettle's *Tragedy of Hoffman*, "or a revenge for a father,"<sup>53</sup> mentioned in Henslowe's Diary in 1602; and *The Tragedy of Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany*,<sup>54</sup> not printed till 1654, though its first form may have antedated 1600. Italy became the scene in Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*<sup>55</sup> (1602), acted by the children of Paul's, and in two powerful plays printed in 1607 as previously acted by Shakespeare's company: *The Devil's Charter*<sup>56</sup> by Barnabe Barnes and *The Revenger's Tragedy*<sup>57</sup> by Cyril Tourneur. The Turk came back in John Mason's tragedy of that title (1610),<sup>58</sup> and the monstrous Moor against a Spanish background in *Lust's Dominion*,<sup>59</sup> which the only surviving text (1657) states to have been "written by Christofer Marloe, Gent."

The uncertainties of authorship, date, and text are so great in most of these plays as to baffle intelligent discussion. They may be said to represent the position of tragedy, except in the hands of the greatest masters, at the

<sup>49</sup> See T. Brooke, "*King Lear* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*," *MLN*, xxvii (1912). 62.

<sup>50</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc., 1911.

<sup>51</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc., 1915.

<sup>52</sup> Reprinted, "*Nero*" & *Other Plays*, Mermaid Series, n. d.

<sup>53</sup> Ed. J. S. Farmer, *Tudor Facsimile Texts* (1913); see H. Jenkins, *The Life and Work of Henry Chettle* (1934), pp. 71-108. *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington*, by Munday and Chettle, 1598, grafts the same horrid sort of tragedy upon the Robin Hood legend.

<sup>54</sup> Ed. H. F. Schwarz (1913), and T. M. Parrott, *Tragedies of George Chapman* (1910), pp. 401-471, 683-720.

<sup>55</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc., 1922.

<sup>56</sup> Ed. R. B. McKerrow (Louvain, 1904).

<sup>57</sup> See A. Nicoll, *Works of Cyril Tourneur* (1929) and below, Part III, ch. III.

<sup>58</sup> Ed. J. Q. Adams (Louvain, 1913). There was a new edition of Mason's play in 1632, perhaps called forth by the posthumous publication of the two still more lurid Oxford tragedies of Thomas Goffe (1591-1629): *The Raging Turk, or Bajazet the Second* (1631) and *The Courageous Turk, or Amurath the First* (1632). For the best account of all these Turkish plays see S. C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose* (1937), ch. XI.

<sup>59</sup> Ed. J. L. G. Brereton (Louvain, 1931).

close of the Elizabethan period. What they most possess is robust violence and great popular appeal, qualities very unlike those of the Senecan imitations from which they grew. Their chief lesson for the critic is that he should not be too much surprised, or speak of sudden and unheralded decadence, when he passes from the sober tragedy of Shakespeare, Jonson, and Chapman to the vehemence of Webster and of Ford.

## VIII

### Sidney and the Sonneteers

#### *Sidney's Personality*

No student of English literature need apologize for devoting a considerable part of his attention to the more personal and social aspects of Sir Philip Sidney<sup>1</sup> (1554-1586). In three directions, to be sure, Sidney's actual achievement ranks him among the very highest of the Elizabethan writers. None but Shakespeare and Spenser produced a finer sonnet sequence. None but Ben Jonson surpassed him as a literary critic. None of the writers of his age approached his influence in the field of prose romance. Yet if *Astrophel and Stella*, the *Defense of Poesy*, and the *Arcadia* had never been published, we should still have to regard Sidney as a cultural landmark. Seconded by his sister, he created through his personal efforts and his personal charm a new artistic atmosphere more stimulating than any other that then existed. Together—or more strictly in succession, for the Countess of Pembroke (1561-1621) was but twenty-five when her brother died—they first produced what in the highest sense may be called the academic spirit in English letters.

#### *His Position in Life*

In an unusual degree Sidney's personality and influence were affected by his environment and by the circumstances of his worldly position. His character was unusually serious and consistent, but the conditions under which he lived his life were extraordinarily fickle and perplexing. The fantastic lights and shadows of his fortune, playing over the high-spirited constancy of his disposition, ripened his romantic genius and gave him the unique place that he held among his contemporaries and yet holds with us. The grandson of a duke, godson of a king, nephew to four earls, brother-in-law of an earl, brother of an earl, and uncle to three earls, he was himself, through nearly all his life, an untitled commoner. Throughout his life he was poor, yet within easy expectation of huge wealth. A special favorite of the Queen and of the most powerful peers, he was without public influence and frequently deprived of ordinary personal liberty. Had he lived two years longer, he might have become Earl of Leicester, as his brother Robert later did; but the only title which he in fact received, that of knight, was granted for the sorriest of possible reasons and brought him neither commendation nor reward. The grotesque alternations of fate manifested in his own family

<sup>1</sup> A. Feuillerat, *The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney* (4v, Cambridge, 1912-1926). The best lives are: M. W. Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (Cambridge, 1915); M. Wilson, *Sir Philip Sidney* (1931); A. H. Bill, *Astrophel* (1937). New manuscript material regarding Sidney is available in V. B. Heltzel and H. H. Hudson, *Nobilis . . . and Lessus Lugubris by Thomas Moffet* (San Marino, Calif., 1940). Sidney's prose works are discussed in K. O. Myrick, *Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman* (Cambridge, Mass., 1935). Fuller references in S. A. Tannenbaum, *Sir Philip Sidney, A Concise Bibliography* (1941).

strengthened his romanticism, his sense of the strangeness of life; the uncertainties and disappointments of his own career heightened in him that democratic independence of mind which makes romanticism potent. Had he been less brilliantly connected or had he himself held a more splendid position, his impact upon literature would probably have been smaller. Master Philip Sidney could befriend Spenser without patronage; the heir presumptive of the Earl of Leicester could practise innovation without suspicion of demagoguery, and get a hearing for his innovations.

Sidney's immense influence was based first upon his open-mindedness, his democratic attitude, and second upon his sincere and eager fancy. These are the qualities in his work also which made it a gospel of romanticism. His open-mindedness brought him acquaintance with very diverse friends and made his brain hospitable to notions sometimes rather alien to his real tastes and convictions. Two groups of literary friends have left traces on his work and on the history of the period. One gathered at Leicester House in London during 1579 and 1580 and was called by Spenser—perhaps only jokingly—the “Areopagus.” To this belonged Sidney and Edward Dyer (later Sir Edward), Spenser, and others. What we know of it we learn from the letters that passed between Spenser and Gabriel Harvey of Cambridge at the time. It appears from them that “some use of familiarity” existed between Spenser and Sidney, and that those two arch-romantics were employing much of their leisure in the futile and unromantic attempt to fit English poetry to classical metres. Spenser's interest in the projected reform in prosody may be assumed to have been short-lived; it was probably imbibed at Cambridge from Harvey. That Sidney's interest was serious is evidenced by the large mass of classicizing verse which he introduced into his *Arcadia*.<sup>2</sup>

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The second group of literary friends by whom Sidney's work was affected is that which met at Wilton, the country house of his sister Mary, the Countess of Pembroke. Here also his romanticism would seem to have developed among ideas predominantly unromantic. The Lady Mary's literary taste appears to have had little in common with Philip's, except that it was fervent and generous. Her claim to recognition as an author rests upon her *Antony*, a translation made four years after Sidney's death, from the French of Robert Garnier.<sup>3</sup> The Elizabethan era has little to show that is less romantic in tone or conception. In the works of others which she inspired—the *Cleopatra* of Daniel, *Cornelia* of Kyd, the *Countess of Pembroke's Ivy-church* and *Countess of Pembroke's Emanuel* by Abraham Fraunce<sup>4</sup>—the neo-classical spirit is equally rampant. For Mary, we may infer, rules were the essence of literature; by Philip they were certainly

*Wilton House*

<sup>2</sup> See G. D. Willcock, “Passing Pitefull Hexameters: A Study of Quantity and Accent in English Renaissance Verse,” *MLR*, xxix (1934), 1-19.

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## VIII

### Sidney and the Sonneteers

#### *Sidney's Personality*

No student of English literature need apologize for devoting a considerable part of his attention to the more personal and social aspects of Sir Philip Sidney<sup>1</sup> (1554-1586). In three directions, to be sure, Sidney's actual achievement ranks him among the very highest of the Elizabethan writers. None but Shakespeare and Spenser produced a finer sonnet sequence. None but Ben Jonson surpassed him as a literary critic. None of the writers of his age approached his influence in the field of prose romance. Yet if *Astrophel and Stella*, the *Defense of Poesy*, and the *Arcadia* had never been published, we should still have to regard Sidney as a cultural landmark. Seconded by his sister, he created through his personal efforts and his personal charm a new artistic atmosphere more stimulating than any other that then existed. Together—or more strictly in succession, for the Countess of Pembroke (1561-1621) was but twenty-five when her brother died—they first produced what in the highest sense may be called the academic spirit in English letters.

#### *His Position in Life*

In an unusual degree Sidney's personality and influence were affected by his environment and by the circumstances of his worldly position. His character was unusually serious and consistent, but the conditions under which he lived his life were extraordinarily fickle and perplexing. The fantastic lights and shadows of his fortune, playing over the high-spirited constancy of his disposition, ripened his romantic genius and gave him the unique place that he held among his contemporaries and yet holds with us. The grandson of a duke, godson of a king, nephew to four earls, brother-in-law of an earl, brother of an earl, and uncle to three earls, he was himself, through nearly all his life, an untitled commoner. Throughout his life he was poor, yet within easy expectation of huge wealth. A special favorite of the Queen and of the most powerful peers, he was without public influence and frequently deprived of ordinary personal liberty. Had he lived two years longer, he might have become Earl of Leicester, as his brother Robert later did; but the only title which he in fact received, that of knight, was granted for the sorriest of possible reasons and brought him neither commendation nor reward. The grotesque alternations of fate manifested in his own family

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respected, but they must largely have appealed to him as material for debate or as points of departure for individual inspiration.

Friendly debate there probably was in plenty at Wilton, and inspiration there must have been; for Sidney's sojourn produced his most conspicuously romantic work, the first *Arcadia*, and most likely also his Shelleyan *Defense of Poesy*. From the dedication of the former it may be fair to conjecture that the author felt something more than ordinary diffidence before his young sister's judgment on his novel—the diffidence which the inspired experimentalist usually feels before the judgment of an esteemed reader who lives fortified by rules and standards:

Here now have you (most dear, and most worthy to be most dear, lady) this idle work of mine; which I fear, like the spider's web, will be thought fitter to be swept away than worn to any other purpose . . . Now it is done only for you, only to you: if you keep it to yourself, or to such friends who will weigh errors in the balance of good will, I hope for the father's sake it will be pardoned, perchance made much of, though in itself it have deformities. For, indeed, for severer eyes it is not, being but a trifle, and that triflingly handled. Your dear self can best witness the manner, being done in loose sheets of paper, most of it in your presence, the rest by sheets sent unto you as fast as they were done. . . .

*The Old  
Arcadia*

This was written about 1581 for what is now known as the "Old *Arcadia*," *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* in its original sense, a work which till 1926 had only been printed in bowdlerized and very incomplete form.<sup>5</sup> It will be better to speak of this admirable story separately, for nothing but confusion has ever resulted from the attempt to criticize it in conjunction with the unfinished enlargement that Sidney later undertook. It may be reasonably supposed that his original purpose was to devise a light pastoral tale beautified with rustic verse after the fashion of Sannazaro's Italian *Arcadia* (1504); but Sidney's spirit was of a more virile cast, and from the start his story showed less similarity to Sannazaro than to the wilder, earlier fictions of Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius.<sup>6</sup> His first *Arcadia*, surviving in half a dozen manuscript copies, is divided into five books or "acts," separated by lengthy intercalations termed "eclogues," which are partly verse (both conventional and quantitative) and partly prose, partly narrative and partly lyrical. The main story, handled in the "acts," has much the quality and structure of one of the tragicomedies which Sidney's namesake, Philip Massinger, later wrote for the seventeenth-century stage. The author appeals first of all to his reader's curiosity. Mystery, variety, suspense, and thrilling episode are the tools he works with. The story begins with disguise, the disguise of the princes Pyrocles and Musidorus; and with mystery, the strangely retired and fearful life led by King Basilius and his family; and

<sup>5</sup> See R. W. Zandvoort *Sidney's Arcadia: A Comparison between the Two Versions* (Amsterdam, 1929); M. S. Goldman, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Arcadia* (Urbana, 1934); A. G. D. Wiles, "Parallel Analyses of the Two Versions of Sidney's *Arcadia*," *SP*, xxxix (1942), 167-206.

<sup>6</sup> See S. L. Wolff, *The Greek Romances in Elizabethan Fiction* (1912). For the influence of the Spanish *Diana* (1559-64) see T. P. Harrison, "A Source of Sidney's *Arcadia*," *Univ. Texas Studies in English*, vi (1926), 53-71; H. Genouy, *L'Arcadia de Sidney dans ses rapports avec l'Arcadia de Sannazaro et la Diana de Montemayor* (Montpellier, 1928).

it culminates like a modern detective story in the rational but quite unguessable solution of a portentous series of suspected crimes.

The first act is brought to a rousing finish by the incursion of a lion and she-bear upon the pastoral entertainments, to be slain in the nick of time by the two heroes. Act II likewise rises to a climax in which the heroes save the king's party from the attack of a rather French-Revolutionary mob upon their rustic lodges. In Act III the lovers have made such progress that Musidorus is able to flee with Pamela toward the seacoast, while Pyrocles, tricking his prospective father- and mother-in-law into a nocturnal meeting with each other, consummates his own love with Philoclea. Act IV brings in the reversal of fortune. It opens with comic relief, in an exceedingly funny account of the discomfiture of Pamela's guard Dametas and his foolish wife and daughter; and passes into melodrama when Basilius drinks a love philtre which his wife Gynecia had intended for Pyrocles, and falls seemingly dead. General Philanax arrives with troops, Pamela and Musidorus are intercepted and brought back captive, and the entire body of lovers put into prison under charges of rape, murder, and treason. Act V opens, like the last act of *Gorboduc*, with discussion of "the dangerous division of men's minds" upon the death of a sovereign. Then appears as *deus ex machina* King Evarchus of Macedon, father of Pyrocles, who presides at a trial full of dramatic tension and noble oratory. The just Evarchus is being obliged to condemn his son and nephew to death when Basilius, recovering from the effects of the potion, is able to procure the happiness of all, and at the same time justify the enigmatic oracle with which the story commenced.

The Old *Arcadia* was plotted as a love trifle for the amusement of the fair and worthy ladies who are in the beginning being constantly invoked; but it was executed in a very masculine spirit. In the portions which Lady Pembroke permitted to be printed in 1593 she has palliated the male forthrightness of several situations;<sup>7</sup> and though this is the strongest and most ingenious love story that any Elizabethan prose writer created, the core of Sidney's thinking is not love but practical psychology, ethics, and politics. The style is smooth and usually simple, depending little upon the alliterative and figurative ornaments that were Lyly's mainstay. It is chiefly marked by the philosophical comments Sidney adds upon the ways men's minds are moved. It is people that interest Sidney, not merely emotions, and his gallery is large, even in the original *Arcadia*. The clownish figures, though caricatures, are outlined with vigor and true humor,<sup>8</sup> and the women are at least courageously attempted; but the main effort goes to probing the minds of gentlemen. In the great trial scene that closes the book attention is focused on four chivalrous characters, who all place duty above self-advan-

<sup>7</sup> K. T. Rowe, "The Countess of Pembroke's Editorship of the *Arcadia*," *PMLA*, LIV (1939), 122-138, argues that Sidney made these changes.

<sup>8</sup> Similar farcical characters, Lalus and Rombus, in Sidney's masque, *The Lady of May* (1578), appear to be prototypes of Don Armado and Holofernes in *Love's Labor's Lost*.

tage and by the power and subtlety of their speeches bring the melodramatic situation near to real tragedy.<sup>9</sup>

*The New  
Arcadia*

Presumably, Sidney was impelled to rewrite the *Arcadia* by the classical and neo-classical studies that he made for his *Defense of Poesy*. His sister and her coterie may have moved him in the same direction. The later *Arcadia* is an attempt to turn a romance into a prose epic which should have the unified complexity and the dignity that the Renaissance Aristotelians demanded.<sup>10</sup> The style is heightened,<sup>11</sup> and the narrative, instead of starting at the beginning (i.e., with the oracle of Basilius), opens in more or less Virgilian fashion with an unexplained shipwreck. The earlier adventures of the heroes in Asia Minor, which had been narrated in the supplementary "eclogues" of the Old *Arcadia*, are woven into the main story of the New. Most important of all, the epic dignity of warfare is imposed upon the pastoral plot by the creation of entirely new characters and incidents more akin to *Amadis of Gaul* and the *Morte Darthur* than to anything in the Old *Arcadia*.<sup>12</sup>

None of these changes was really dissonant from Sidney's taste, and they have been made with great brilliance. The Old *Arcadia* has been taken apart like a watch, its individual movements polished and then fitted into the new structure, often in quite dissimilar positions and amid a vast amount of new material. The third book is altogether new and entirely epical in tone. Here the heroines are kidnapped and imprisoned in a castle by their wicked aunt Cecropia and her knightly son Amphialus, characters unknown to the earlier version. The perils of the captives, and the daring deeds of the besiegers and defenders alike, fill this book with a high and varied excitement. Some of Sidney's finest writing is here; for example, the story of the deaths of Argalus and Parthenia and the noble prayer of Pamela,<sup>13</sup> which in the *Eikon Basilike* was credited to King Charles I. It is clear, however, that the New *Arcadia* was being carried entirely out of touch with the Old, and it seems doubtful whether Sidney could have brought it to any consistent conclusion. At any rate, it breaks off near the end (we may presume) of Book III, in the midst of a most furious single combat between Anaxius and Pyrocles, and in the middle of a sentence. Earlier lacunae show that the text had not received Sidney's final revision; but the effort at sonorous style, especially at the crises of action, is much greater than in the Old *Arcadia*. One such, pitched in the key of wonder, is the passage that Scott copied in *Ivanhoe*, the arrival of the mysterious Black Knight (Muscadorus) before the besieged castle:

<sup>9</sup> See W. D. Briggs, "Political Ideas in Sidney's *Arcadia*," *SP*, xxviii (1931). 137-161; xlix (1932). 534-542.

<sup>10</sup> See E. A. Greenlaw, "Sidney's *Arcadia* as an Example of Elizabethan Allegory," *Kittredge Anniversary Papers* (1913), pp. 327-337; "The Captivity Episode in Sidney's *Arcadia*," *Manly Anniversary Studies* (Chicago, 1923), pp. 54-63; Myrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-193; J. H. Hanford and S. R. Watson, "Personal Allegory in the *Arcadia*," *MP* xxxii (1934). 1-10.

<sup>11</sup> See W. Clemen, *Shakespeare's Bilder* (Bonn, 1936), pp. 317-322; S. Harkness, "The Prose Style of Sir Philip Sidney," *Univ. Wis. Stud. in Lang. and Lit.*, II (1918). 57-76.

<sup>12</sup> See M. S. Goldman, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-210.

<sup>13</sup> Ed. Feuillerat, p. 382.

But Philanax his men, as if with the loss of Philanax they had lost the fountain of their valor, had their courages so dried up in fear that they began to set honor at their backs . . . when into the press comes (as hard as his horse, more afraid of the spur than the sword, could carry him) a knight in armor as dark as blackness could make it, followed by none and adorned by nothing . . . But virtue quickly made him known, and admiration bred him such authority, that though they of whose side he came knew him not, yet they all knew it was fit to obey him . . . For, taking part with the besiegers, he made the Amphialians' blood serve for a caparison to his horse and a decking to his armor. His arm no oftener gave blows than the blows gave wounds, than the wounds gave deaths; so terrible was his force, and yet was his quickness more forcible than his force, and his judgment more quick than his quickness.<sup>14</sup>

A specimen of subtler writing is the delicate analysis of the stages by which Philoclea fell in love, which has been developed out of something much less detailed in the earlier version:

For after that Zelmane [i.e., Pyrocles in female disguise] had a while lived in the lodge with her, and that her only being a noble stranger had bred a kind of heedful attention, her coming to that lonely place (where she had nobody but her parents) a willingness of conversation, her wit and behavior a liking and silent admiration; at length the excellency of her natural gifts, joined with the extreme shows she made of most devout honoring Philoclea (carrying thus in one person the only two bands of good will, loveliness and lovingness) brought forth in her heart a yielding to a most friendly affection; which, when it had gotten so full possession of the keys of her mind that it would receive no message from her senses without that affection were the interpreter, then straight grew an exceeding delight still to be with her, with an unmeasurable liking of all that Zelmane did: matters being so turned in her that, where at first liking her manners did breed good will, now good will became the chief cause of liking her manners; so that within a while Zelmane was not prized for her demeanor, but the demeanor was prized because it was Zelmane's.<sup>15</sup>

The characteristics which make the *Defense of Poesy*<sup>16</sup> a great piece of criticism, and which at the same time note it as a romantic work, for all its dependence on neo-classic learning, are, first, its vindication of the spirit of poetry as opposed to details of form or content; and, second, its democratic attitude—that is, its sweet reasonableness, its approval of what is genuine and impressive even where not justifiable by rules of art.<sup>17</sup> There is nothing iconoclastic in Sidney's attitude toward rules. He treats them with respect and is willing to accept their validity where, as in the drama

*The  
Defense  
of Poesy*

<sup>14</sup> Ed. Feuillerat, p. 391 f.

<sup>15</sup> Ed. Feuillerat, p. 169; compare Old *Arcadia*, p. 93, lines 11-15. The most important derivative of the *Arcadia* is the *Argenis* of the Franco-Scot John Barclay (1582-1621), in five long books, which achieved great popularity by combining knightly (Sicilian) romance and political allegory. Written in Latin and first printed at Paris in 1621, it was speedily translated into English (e.g., by Ben Jonson in a non-extant version (1623), and by Kingsmill Long in 1625) as into many other vernaculars; but it hardly belongs to English literature.

<sup>16</sup> Two editions were printed in 1595, one with the title here used, the other with the title, *An Apology for Poetry*.

<sup>17</sup> See Irene Samuel, "The Influence of Plato on Sir Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*," *MLQ*, 1 (1940). 383-391.

before 1580, violations had not justified themselves. But his fundamental position is a protest against dogma; it was dogmatic Puritanism, as embodied in Gosson's *School of Abuse*,<sup>18</sup> which occasioned the writing of the essay, if we may believe Spenser<sup>19</sup> and the bibliographical evidence in the case.

Sidney begins his defense of poetry by championing the superiority of imagination over fact. The poet, he says, is a finer influence than the historian, the philosopher, or the mathematician, because more truly than they he creates; because he does not simply analyze nature, but transcends her; because his end is less narrow and more ideal. Sidney's breadth of literary sympathy and his predominating romanticism are evidenced by the works which he selects for praise: Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, the *Mirror for Magistrates*, Surrey (i.e., Tottel's Miscellany), *Gorboduc*, the *Shepherds' Calendar*, and the ballad of Percy and Douglas. The judicious Hallam has a remark on Sidney in relation to the literature of his time, which has been echoed in a mistaken sense, as if his critical taste had been out of harmony with the true current of the age. "It is amusing to reflect," says Hallam,

that this contemptuous reprehension of the English theatre (and he had spoken in as disparaging terms of our general poetry) came from the pen of Sidney, when Shakespeare had just arrived at manhood. Had he not been so prematurely cut off, what would have been the transports of that noble spirit, which the ballad of Chevy Chase could "stir as with the sound of a trumpet," in reading the *Faery Queen* or *Othello*?<sup>20</sup>

It is not the smallest proof of the fidelity of Sidney's *Defense* to the spirit of Elizabethan romanticism, that its temper seems so just to us who read it in the light of the literature that was to follow. No harder task for a critic could well be imagined than that which Sidney accomplished: to write at the moment of Elizabethan dawn a sketch of the function and powers of poetry which Shakespeare, Spenser, and Marlowe should not render obsolete. Though there are in his essay some generalities, orthodox in 1580, which Sidney would certainly have abandoned in 1600, there can be no question that he was inwardly adjusted to the romantic noontide he was not to see. Of the *Cambises* vein in tragedy he thought as Shakespeare thought. Let us remember to his honor that in judging the best tragedy of his lifetime, *Gorboduc*, which he praised as "climbing to the height of Seneca his style," he did not seek to fill the loftier niches reserved for *Doctor Faustus* and *Othello*; and that in his mingled praise and blame for the *Shepherds' Calendar* he seemed to sense the greater splendor of the *Faerie Queene*.

#### Sidney's Poetry

Sidney's poetical works fill three volumes in Grosart's edition. Their variety is as great as their quantity. They comprise nearly a hundred and fifty sonnets, many songs for musical setting, pastoral narratives and dia-

<sup>18</sup> See above, ch. v.

<sup>19</sup> Spenser's letter to Harvey, Oct. 5, 1579, mentions Sidney's "scorn" of the *School of Abuse*. See J. S. P. Tatlock, "Bernardo Tasso and Sidney," *Italica*, XII (1935), 74-80.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Hallam, *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, Part II., ch. VI.

logues, epithalamia and other occasional verse, translations of French and Latin poetry, and metrical versions of the psalms of David. They illustrate all the different forms of the sonnet and all the chief metres employed in English and in Latin versification. The *Astrophel and Stella* sequence—Astrophel  
and Stella one hundred and eight sonnets and eleven songs—contains about a third of Sidney's extant poetry, and the metrical insertions in the *Arcadia* another third. It was *Astrophel and Stella*, apparently, that the Elizabethans mainly thought of in connection with Sidney's name; and it is as the author of *Astrophel and Stella* that posterity also best remembers him.

Like the other major works of this frequently interrupted courtier, *Astrophel and Stella* may have been written over a number of years; but the mastery of the Petrarchan sonnet structure which it displays indicates that it is later than the fifteen sonnets in the Old *Arcadia*,<sup>21</sup> and most of it was probably composed between the marriage of Penelope Devereux to Lord Rich in the autumn of 1581<sup>22</sup> and that of Sidney to Frances Walsingham two years later. Though these poems are, almost without exception, superb in form, nothing could be much more misguided than the effort to interpret them as merely formal exercises. The autobiographical sincerity asserted in many of them is evident in nearly all; not to recognize it disqualifies the critic.<sup>23</sup> They report the feeling of an earnest and emotionally-delayed youth for a young girl with whom he had almost contracted a marriage of convenience in her childhood and with whom he had been on matter-of-course relations by reason of her mother's marriage to his uncle. Sidney seems to have looked in his heart only after she was betrothed to another. Penelope apparently escaped seduction, having another lover to whom she was more faithful than to her husband; but she came near enough to it to set in motion all the pulses of Sidney's being, and his sonnets, with the interspersed songs that punctuate and interpret them, form one of the greatest love poems in the language, as flawless in its psychology as in its rhythms. It is, as Hazlitt called *Romeo and Juliet*, the story of Hamlet in love. But though love, entirely real and essentially noble, is the dominant theme, *Astrophel and Stella* is no more than the *Arcadia* simply a narrative of love. The adjectives that Lamb<sup>24</sup> applies to it, "full, material, and circumstantiated," have not been improved upon. This late, tormenting, and unsatisfied passion becomes the master light that reveals the depths of a

<sup>21</sup> Nine of these are in the Shakespearean form, which is not used at all in *Astrophel and Stella* proper, though it does occur in the fine supplementary sonnet, "Leave me, O love, which reachest but to dust" (No. 110), first found in the folio of 1598. See R. G. Whigam and O. F. Emerson, "Sonnet Structure in Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*," *SP*, xviii (1921). 347-352.

<sup>22</sup> See L. C. John, "The Date of the Marriage of Penelope Devereux," *PMLA*, XLIX (1934). 961-962.

<sup>23</sup> See H. H. Hudson, "Penelope Devereux as Sidney's Stella," *Huntington Library Bull.*, no. 7 (1935), pp. 89-129; J. M. Purcell, *Sidney's Stella* (1934); T. H. Banks, "Astrophel and Stella Reconsidered," *PMLA*, L (1935). 403-412; W. G. Friedrich, "The Stella of Astrophel," *ELH*, III (1936). 114-139; D. E. Baughan, "Sir Philip Sidney and the Matchmakers," *MLR*, xxxiii (1938). 506-519.

<sup>24</sup> "Some Sonnets of Sir Philip Sydney," in *Last Essays of Elia*.



character not primarily amorous, but living in a world of men and great deeds.

The underlining of the genuine rather than the fashionable is what gives these poems their closest affinity with the *Arcadia* and the *Defense of Poesy*. The sonnet to the moon, one of Lamb's three special favorites, is an instructive example of straightforward realism, as opposed to the classical formalism of much Elizabethan verse. It would not be easy to find a contemporary invocation to the orb of night which refrains from calling her Cynthia, or which so honestly restricts itself to thoughts of the actual moon and the actual poet. Sidney's address should be compared with Jonson's beautiful apostrophe in the classical spirit to the "Queen and huntress, chaste and fair, . . . goddess excellently bright." The contrast shows how ornate classic art can often be, and how pure romantic art.

*The Vogue  
of the Son-  
net after  
Sidney*

*Watson's  
Hecatomp-  
athia*

*Daniel's  
Delia*

The sonnet of fourteen lines, based on Petrarch or his Italian and French imitators, was conspicuous in Tottel's Miscellany (1557), but it evidently lost favor and its name was transferred to other types of short lyric. After Tottel, the true sonnet is not often found in the anthologies until the appearance of the *Phoenix Nest* (1593), which contains fifteen examples, mainly of the Shakespearean or Surreyque kind. It was Marlowe's friend, Thomas Watson (c. 1557-1592) who recalled the sonnet to the attention of English readers in his *Hecatompethia* (1582), published at just the time when Sidney was composing his own sequence; and the great vogue began when *Astrophel and Stella* was printed, in three editions, in 1591, the first prefaced by Thomas Nashe.<sup>25</sup>

The first to follow was Samuel Daniel with his *Delia* (1592). Daniel was the protégé and neighbor of Lady Pembroke, to whom his sequence was dedicated. Twenty-eight of his sonnets—that is, about half—had indeed appeared in 1591 as a supplement to Newman's edition of *Astrophel and Stella*. Daniel is a smooth writer, though too much given to bad rimes and strange new words. His best, as well as best-known, sonnet is No. 49, "Care-charmer sleep, son of the sable night." He uses almost exclusively the easy Shakespearean form and borrows his ideas copiously from Desportes and other Continental poets. His worst fault is prolixity, which gives a dreadful pertinence to the line that closes his last sonnet:

I say no more. I fear I said too much.

*Constable's  
Diana*

Henry Constable's *Diana* favors the rime-scheme that Sidney used most: *abbaabba cdcdde*. As first printed in 1592, it contained but twenty-three poems, which the publisher two years later increased to seventy-seven by adding sonnets of Sidney and other unnamed poets. Fantastic conceit is Constable's worst enemy.

<sup>25</sup> Sidney Lee, *Elizabethan Sonnets* (2v, n.d.); J. G. Scott, *Les sonnets élisabéthains* (Paris, 1929); L. C. John, *The Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences* (1938). L. E. Pearson, *Elizabethan Love Conventions* (Berkeley, 1938) is pertinent to this topic. Nearly all the sequences mentioned here will be found in Lee's collection; Emaricdulfe and Rogers' *Celestial Elegies*, however, are in *A Lampport Garland*, ed. C. Edmonds (Roxburghe Club, 1881).



The next year, 1593, brought out a posthumous volume by Watson, *The Barnes, Tears of Fancy*, which has technical skill but lacks emotion; and also the *Fletcher, Parthenophil and Parthenophe* of Barnabe Barnes, *Licia* by Giles Fletcher (the elder), and *Phyllis* by Thomas Lodge. The best of these is Fletcher, *Lodge* who is fluent and intelligible. Lodge, who was writing during a sea-voyage, is the most servile in his imitations, though here as elsewhere he shows abundant sweetness. Barnes, a north-countryman with a weakness for uncouth words, is the most *outré* as well as the most varied and copious.<sup>26</sup> His 66th sonnet, "Ah, sweet content, where is thy mild abode?", and Fletcher's 28th, on the ravages of time, are admirable treatments of obvious themes.

In 1594 the son of the Earl of Northumberland, William Percy, published *Percy's* his thin collection, *Cœlia*, consisting of twenty sonnets evoked by the *Cœlia* example of Barnes, who was the friend of the author. It shares Barnes' harsh vocabulary, but lacks his merits. This and the worthless and anonymous *Zepheria* of the same year were quite eclipsed by Drayton's *Idea*, which *Drayton's* seeks variety and scoffs at the sonneteering epidemic even while submitting *Idea* to it; e.g.,

Think'st thou my wit shall keep the packhorse way  
That every dudgeon low invention goes?  
Since sonnets thus in bundles are impress'd  
And every drudge doth dull our satiate ear,  
Think'st thou my love shall in those rags be dress'd  
That every dowdy, every trull, doth wear? <sup>27</sup>

Drayton is lively and interesting, and though he quite lacks Sidney's depth, he has something of Sidney's directness. The two sonnets on his native Warwickshire stream, the Ankor (Nos. 32, 53), seem to prelude the *Poly-Olbion*, and a later sonnet (No. 47), on Drayton's triumphs in the theatre, is a charming vignette. As first printed in 1594, *Idea* consisted of fifty-two sonnets with a good many different rime-schemes; but the poet kept altering his collection in subsequent editions, and his best beloved example, "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part," first appeared in the final recension of 1619.

The year 1595 saw the publication of Spenser's *Amoretti* and Chapman's *Chapman's* metaphysical sequence, *A Coronet for his Mistress Philosophy*. Shakespeare's *Sequence* sonnets, too, though not printed, were probably written by this time; and an unidentified E. C. Esq. produced a sequence of forty, *Emaricdulfe*, good *E. C., Emar-* metrically and of better than average literary quality. This was the height *icdulfe,* of the movement, which then very rapidly dwindled. The collections that *1595* appeared the next year, 1596, were by young men who were merely following the fashion: *Fidessa* by Bartholomew Griffin, *Diella* by Richard Lynch, and

<sup>26</sup> See M. Eccles, "Barnabe Barnes," in C. J. Sisson, *Thomas Lodge and Other Elizabethans* (1933), pp. 165-241. In 1595 Barnes published a hundred religious sonnets, *A Divine Century of Spiritual Sonnets*, almost all in Sidney's usual rime-scheme.

<sup>27</sup> No. 31, first printed in the edition of 1599.

*Chloris* by William Smith. Robert Tofte's *Laura* (1597) avoids the too familiar quatorzain for stanzas of twelve and ten lines alternately; Thomas Rogers devotes his *Celestial Elegies* (1598) to funeral lamentation rather than love.<sup>28</sup>

Shake-  
speare's  
Sonnets

The belated publication of Shakespeare's sonnets in 1609 almost certainly happened without his knowledge or approval; presumably the circulation "among his private friends" reported in 1598 was all that he intended. Of all the Elizabethan sonnet sequences Shakespeare's is the least typical.<sup>29</sup> It celebrates not the idealized love of an idealized mistress but the affection of an older man for a gilded and wayward youth. Even the 25 sonnets addressed to a dark lady express repulsion as well as fascination. On the showing of the sonnets Shakespeare's experience of love and friendship was turbid and disheartening. They abound in meditations on estrangement, failure, and death. They bewail the poet's outcast state, death's dateless night, the anxieties of separation, time's giving and taking away, even world-weariness. The conclusion, however, is triumphant—an uncompromising affirmation of the transcendence of love. The later sonnets (100-126) assert and reassert that love, and love alone, withstands the onslaught of time, eternal amidst the world's ruin and decay.

As sheer poetry they have been variously judged. Even in the twentieth century, when their reputation stands high, they have been described as "seldom perfect." It is true that they often end in a minor key; the final couplet, commonly a hyperbolical statement of unstinted admiration, sometimes even of servile devotion, often seems almost an afterthought. Some of the sonnets are obstinately private and elusive, and some are conceits, exercises in reaching old conclusions by new ways. But the happiest of them reach the old conclusions through series of metaphors of incomparable suggestive power. The style, somewhat surprisingly in view of all the auguries, is rich, not gaudy; it is largely free from the ingenuities of the early plays and from the dense figurativeness of the later. The control of tone and texture is superb. The passions of the poet are much less stormy than those of the characters of his plays, but they are expressed with the same power.

There is no saying how many Elizabethan sonnets followed in the wake of *Astrophel and Stella*. A couple of thousand, at least, have survived.

<sup>28</sup> The sonnets of Henry Lok, or Locke, 1597 (ed. A. B. Grosart, 1871) are a prodigious monument of technical skill, and unfortunately they are little else. There are nearly four hundred of them, usually on moral and biblical themes, and assembled in centuries under such titles as *Sonnets of Christian Passions* and *Sonnets of a Feeling Conscience*.

<sup>29</sup> The latest edition, by H. E. Rollins (*New Variorum Shakespeare*, 2v, 1944), resumes earlier scholarship and criticism and is the best guide to the enormous literature on the subject. Much of it is inspired by the hope of identifying the persons whom the sonnets mention—the fair youth to whom most of them are addressed, the dark lady of sonnets 127-152, and the rival poet. A clue to the identity of the fair youth has been seen in the publisher's dedication to "the onlie begetter of these insuing sonnets Mr. W. H." As the initials fit, at least after a fashion, two noblemen otherwise known to have patronized Shakespeare (Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, and William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke), each is backed by an impressive number of advocates (see below, p. 526). A persistent suspicion that the order in which the sonnets were published is not the order in which they were written or intended to be read has led to many attempts to rearrange them (see Rollins, II, 74-116).

# IX

## Edmund Spenser

When the sap seems to have gone out of poetry and the patterns of life have grown too stereotyped, a new writer will sometimes appear like heaven's benediction with the demand for homelier things and a truer poetic language. *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 and *A Shropshire Lad* in 1896 were literary events of the same kind as *The Shepherds' Calendar*<sup>1</sup> in 1579. Spenser<sup>2</sup> also aimed at fresher cadences, ballad simplicity, and a new social philosophy. He did not, any more than Wordsworth in 1798, stand quite alone, though for some years readers referred to him only as "the new poet," or by his modest pseudonyms, Colin Clout and "Immerito." The twelve eclogues with which he made his début are addressed to Philip Sidney in the most charming of all Spenser's famous Dedications:

"The New  
Poet"

The  
Shepherds'  
Calendar  
(1579)

Go, little book: thyself present,  
As child whose parent is unkent,  
To him that is the president  
Of noblesse and of chivalry.  
And if that Envy bark at thee,  
As sure it will, for succor flee  
Under the shadow of his wing;  
And asked, who thee forth did bring,  
A shepherd's swain, say, did thee sing,  
All as his straying flock he fed;  
And when his honor has thee read,  
Crave pardon for thy hardihead. . . .  
And when thou art past jeopardy,  
Come tell me what was said of me,  
And I will send more after thee.

<sup>1</sup> See edition by C. H. Herford (1895, 1914); R. B. Botting, "The Composition of the *Shepherd's Calendar*," *PMLA*, L (1935), 423-34; M. Parmenter, "Spenser's Twelve Aeglogues Proportionable to the Twelve Monethes," *ELH*, III (1936), 190-217; J. B. Fletcher, "The Puritan Argument in Spenser," *PMLA*, LVIII (1943), 634-648.

<sup>2</sup> Works, Variorum Edition, ed. E. A. Greenlaw, F. M. Padelford, C. G. Osgood, R. Heffner, and others (in progress; 8 vols. to date; Baltimore, 1933-); *Poetical Works*, ed. R. E. N. Dodge (1908); *Minor Poems*, ed. E. de Selincourt (Oxford, 1910). The editions of the minor poems (with individual titles) by W. L. Renwick (3v, 1928-1930) contain valuable notes. The best biography, incorporating facts recently discovered, is A. C. Judson, *The Life of Edmund Spenser* (1945), supplementary to the Variorum. — F. I. Carpenter, *A Reference Guide to Edmund Spenser* (Chicago, 1923); D. F. Atkinson, *Edmund Spenser, a Bibliographical Supplement* (Baltimore, 1937); F. R. Johnson, *A Critical Bibliography of the Works of Edmund Spenser printed before 1700* (Baltimore, 1933), C. G. Osgood, *Concordance* (Washington, 1915); C. H. Whitman, *Subject Index to the Poems* (New Haven, 1918). For general criticism see H. S. V. Jones, *A Spenser Handbook* (1930); W. L. Renwick, *Edmund Spenser, an Essay on Renaissance Poetry* (1925); B. E. C. Davis, *Edmund Spenser, a Critical Study* (1933); M. Y. Hughes, *Virgil and Spenser* (Berkeley, 1929); C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford, 1936).

E. K., who was probably his Cambridge friend Edward Kirke, provided the poems with explanatory notes and a critical introduction in the form of an open letter to Gabriel Harvey. A young man's verses have not often been equipped on first appearance with such a panoply of scholarship.<sup>3</sup>

Spenser's schoolboy labors, ten years before, in translating Petrarch and du Bellay for Van der Noodt's *Theatre* (1569) would have been enough to call his attention to foreign vernaculars, and he had had a thorough grounding in the classics. His last two eclogues are imitations of Clement Marot; the eighth follows Virgil in theme and Petrarch in form. Elsewhere he adapts the ancient Greek pastoral of Bion or Theocritus and the modern Latin satire of Mantuanus, whom Barclay and Turberville had been translating. But behind the remarkable variety, both in matter and metre, which is one of the especial tokens of promise in *The Shepherds' Calendar*, lies the fundamental assertion that the only way for the poetry of Spenser's time is the way of Chaucer, who is exalted as Tityrus, "the god of shepherds,"

Who taught me, homely as I can, to make.  
He, whilst he lived, was the sovereign head  
Of shepherds all that bene with love ytake;<sup>4</sup>

and he is (as Spenser was later to phrase it) the "well of English undefiled."<sup>5</sup> This prime purpose of the work, to rid poetic diction of foreign encumbrance and restore Chaucerian vigor and simplicity, is again stated with Wordsworthian doggedness in E. K.'s Epistle:

For in my opinion it is one special praise, of many which are due to this poet [i.e., Spenser], that he hath labored to restore, as to their rightful heritage, such good and natural English words as have been long time out of use and almost clean disherited. Which is the only cause that our mother tongue, which truly of itself is both full enough for prose and stately enough for verse, hath long time been counted most bare and barren of both.

#### Spenser's Education

*The Shepherds' Calendar* is a turning point for Elizabethan poetry. It is the first landmark in Spenser's career. He was twenty-seven years old. Born in London and educated under Mulcaster at the Merchant Taylors' School, he had lived for seven years at Cambridge in Pembroke Hall, which had a strong tradition of Calvinism. Ridley, the martyr, had been Master there, and had been succeeded by Edmund Grindal (Spenser's "Algrind"), whom Queen Elizabeth later suspended from the archbishopric of Canterbury for his too Puritan leanings. When Spenser matriculated, in 1569, Grindal had given place to John Young, a cleric of the same stripe.<sup>6</sup> It is clear that the poet imbibed the sympathies of the place, and these sympathies appear in *The Shepherds' Calendar*. On receiving his M. A. in 1576, he lived for a

<sup>3</sup> See D. T. Starnes, "E. K.'s Classical Allusions Reconsidered," *SP*, xxxix (1942). 143-159.

<sup>4</sup> *June*, 81 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Faerie Queene*, iv. ii. st. 32.

<sup>6</sup> See P. W. Long, "Spenser and the Bishop of Rochester," *PMLA*, xxxi (1916). 713-735; A. C. Judson, "A Biographical Sketch of John Young," *Indiana Univ. Stud.* xxi (1934); L. Bradner, "An Allusion to Bromley in the *Shepherds' Calendar*," *MLN*, xlix (1934). 443-445.

period in the north of England, and then or later fell in love with the Rosalind of the poem, who, though Colin Clout is represented as languishing hopelessly for her, is thought by some to have become Edmund Spenser's wife shortly before his verses were printed.<sup>7</sup>

*His First  
Marriage*

When *The Shepherds' Calendar* was being written, Spenser had returned to the south, and was "the southern shepherd's boy," that is, secretary to Young, his old college Master, now Bishop of Rochester, whom he praises as "Roffyn" in the September eclogue. By the time the poems were published, however, late in 1579, he had passed into the service of the Earl of Leicester, the political leader of the more Protestant part of the nation; and, as the letters which he exchanged with Harvey at this time show, he was at home in Leicester House, London, which may be described as the great Conservative Club of the metropolis, and was expecting to be sent abroad on a mission for Leicester. National, literary, and ecclesiastic convictions merge in *The Shepherds' Calendar* in a consistent pattern from which the later Spenser did not depart. He stands for an ultra-English poetry as incarnated in Chaucer, for low-church theology as represented by Grindal and Young against the high-church formalism of John Aylmer, Bishop of London (the "Morrell" of the July eclogue), and (as yet by implication chiefly) for Leicester's policy of suspicion toward French entanglements. The minor note of melancholy withdrawal, which generally marks Spenser's poetry and probably hampered him as a political agent, is strong in the "plaintive" group of eclogues dealing with Colin Clout (Nos. 1, 6, 11, 12). His matchless musical powers, hampered by the archaism of many eclogues, appear chiefly in the song on Queen Elizabeth in *April* and the lines on poetic inspiration in *October*, some of which Ben Jonson had by heart. The breadth and immediacy of its intellectual basis and the variety of effects and rhythms obtained are what most call attention to this work.

*His Politics*

Hardly half a year had elapsed from the publication of *The Shepherds' Calendar* when Spenser's course was diverted by his appointment as secretary to the new governor of Ireland, Lord Grey of Wilton. To call this a penalty for his interference in courtly politics is to ignore Elizabethan, and most other, conceptions of reward and punishment. The post was highly honorable in itself, and led to further emoluments and advancement; but the life of an administrator in Ireland was arduous and checked for ten years the output of Spenser's poetry.<sup>8</sup> He had begun the *Faerie Queene* before he left England in August, 1580, but it was not till late in 1589 that he was able to return and find a printer for the first three books, which appeared in 1590. This, the earliest publication to bear Spenser's name, he boldly dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, who rewarded him, signally enough, by the grant of a pension of fifty pounds a year. The publisher, William Ponsonby, was soon impelled to seek out more of Spenser's work, and during 1591

<sup>7</sup> For various views see M. Eccles, "Spenser's First Marriage," *LTLS*, Dec. 31, 1931, p. 1053; T. H. Banks, "Spenser's Rosalind: A Conjecture," *PMLA*, LII (1937), 335-337; D. Hamer, "Spenser's Marriage," *RES*, VII (1931), 271-290.

<sup>8</sup> See R. Jenkins, "Spenser: The Uncertain Years, 1584-1589," *PMLA*, LIII (1938), 350-62.



**Daphnaida** issued two volumes of his minor poems. *Daphnaida*,<sup>9</sup> which in the preface is dated January 1, 1591, is a long ceremonious elegy on the recent death of a lady of rank, notable for its lovely metrical structure (an original adaptation of rime royal) and delicate balance of parts. It is reminiscent of Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, and may be regarded as Spenser's most consummate tribute to medieval art and to his great predecessor.

**Complaints** The other volume is of much more mixed character, and is entitled *Complaints, containing Sundry Small Poems of the World's Vanity*.<sup>10</sup> Ponsonby claims to have made the collection, but it is evident that the poet helped him, for the book is in four parts with separate title-pages (the first three dated 1591, the fourth 1590), and each part has a signed dedication from Spenser to a lady of the court, viz. the Countess of Pembroke, and the three titled sisters of the Althorpe Spencer family with whom the poet avowed relationship. In studying this volume one studies the development of Spenser's style from his earliest beginnings to full maturity. The *Visions of Bellay*, *Visions of Petrarch*, *Visions of the World's Vanity*, and *Ruins of Rome*, all in sonnet form, are either recastings of his very youthful contribution to the Van der Noodt *Theatre* of 1569 or else exercises in the same direction, showing discipleship to the French Pléiade and the cult of emblem poetry. Also early is the paraphrase of the Virgilian *Culex*, entitled *Virgil's Gnat*, which is in fluent and melodious *ottava rima*, but is chiefly important for the introductory sonnet to Leicester in which Spenser seems to reprimand that nobleman for his part in the obscure business that led to the poet's transfer from Leicester House to Ireland in 1580. Of more uncertain date is the formalized *Tears of the Muses*, probably suggested by Gabriel Harvey's Latin *Musarum Lachrimae* of 1578, and lamenting the decay of art, learning, and virtue. The sentiments are such as Spenser or most other Elizabethans would have subscribed to in any fit of depression, and the supposedly topical allusions have not proved helpful.

**Ruins of  
Time**

The first poem in the book, *The Ruins of Time*, is much more significant. Addressed to the Countess of Pembroke and provided with a neo-mythological introduction out of Camden's *Britannia* (1586) and two concluding series of poetical "visions," this remarkably skilful and fervent poem condole with her on the loss of various relatives, particularly her brother Sidney and her uncles of Leicester and Warwick. The major part of it must have been, and probably all of it was, written shortly before publication. It is not an easy type in which to achieve immortality; but it is marked by Spenser's endearing fineness of feeling, and his handling of the rime royal admits bursts of the verbal orchestration in which he is with Milton; as in this stanza to Sidney in heaven:

<sup>9</sup> Ed. W. L. Renwick, *Daphnaida and Other Poems* (1929), including also *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, *Astrophel*, *Amoretti*, *Epithalamion*, *Four Hymns*, *Prothalamion*. See H. E. Sandison, "Arthur Gorges, Spenser's Alcyon and Raleigh's Friend," *PMLA*, XLIII (1928), 645-674.

<sup>10</sup> Ed. W. L. Renwick (1928). See H. Stein, *Studies in Spenser's Complaints* (1934).

But now more happy thou, and wretched we,  
Which want the wonted sweetness of thy voice,  
Whiles thou now in Elysian fields so free  
With Orpheus and with Linus, and the choice  
Of all that ever did in rimes rejoice,  
Conversest, and dost hear their heavenly lays,  
And they hear thine, and thine do better praise.<sup>11</sup>

There is an undercurrent, however, of the contemptuous anger that rankled in him during the year 1590, while he was prosecuting his claim for reward at court; and this emerges in one most tactless stanza against Burghley, the great Lord Treasurer, who is said to have protested to the queen that fifty pounds a year was too much for a song:

O grief of griefs! O gall of all good hearts!  
To see that virtue should despised be  
Of him that first was rais'd for virtuous parts,  
And now, broad-spreading like an aged tree,  
Lets none shoot up that nigh him planted be.  
O let the man of whom the Muse is scorned,  
Nor alive, nor dead, be of the Muse adorned.<sup>12</sup>

There may be a more sustained allusiveness in another of the great poems *Muiopotmos* in *Complaints*; namely, *Muiopotmos, or the Fate of the Butterfly*. It is in the ironic Italian metre of *Virgil's Gnat, ottava rima*, and opens like a mock-heroic parable:

I sing of deadly dolorous debate,  
Stirr'd up through wrathful Nemesis' despite  
Betwixt two mighty ones of great estate,  
Drawn into arms and proof of mortal fight  
Through proud ambition and heartswelling hate,  
Whilst neither could the other's greater might  
And 'sdainful scorn endure; that from small jar  
Their wraths at length broke into open war.

But the story seems to have suffered truncation at some time, perhaps in the process of being turned into a fit offering for Lady Carey, and no satisfactory elucidation is available. It may be Spenser's semi-playful warning to his friend Raleigh to beware of the web that the Cecil spider wove.<sup>13</sup> It needs no such exegesis; for as it stands it is one of the most delightful of poetic fantasies, dealing with matters in which Spenser's genius was always at home: the re-weaving of old myths and the daintiness of insects, formal gardens, and fine needle-work.

<sup>11</sup> Lines 330 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Lines 449 ff.

<sup>13</sup> See J. M. Lyons, "Spenser's *Muiopotmos* as an Allegory," *PMLA*, xxxi (1916). 90-113; H. J. C. Grierson, "Spenser's *Muiopotmos*," *MLR*, xvii (1922). 409-411. The number of variant interpretations of this poem is nearly infinite.



Mother  
Hubbard's  
Tale

The greatest poem in *Complaints* and the longest is *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, Spenser's only ambitious effort in heroic couplets. Here there is no doubt of the satiric intention; and if, as is commonly believed, the last third of the poem was written ten years after the rest, the joining has been so skilfully done as to leave few stylistic traces. One must assume that the sections which seem to allude to conditions in 1580 were pretty thoroughly recast in 1590. The tale is really four tales of the malefactions of a fox and an ape, who in the first three live disguised in the world of men, but in the last inhabit a beast-world. The satire rises through four levels, in which Spenser successively attacks agricultural, clerical, social, and finally imperial mores. The narrative is in each case interesting and ironic. The picture of life at court in the third part contains a great set passage on "the brave courtier"<sup>14</sup> which may be regarded as a statement of the general Renaissance doctrine of the gentleman, or as an unlabeled character sketch of Sir Philip Sidney in particular; and this part ends with an arraignment of the servile and stultifying conditions of Elizabethan court favor, expressed in the strongest couplet verse written by any Englishman before Dryden:

So pitiful a thing is suitor's state . . .  
Full little knowest thou that hast not tried,  
What hell it is in suing long to bide:  
To lose good days that might be better spent,  
To waste long nights in pensive discontent;  
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow;  
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;  
To have thy prince's grace, yet want her peers';  
To have thy asking, yet wait many years;  
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares,  
To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs:  
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,  
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.<sup>15</sup>

In the last tale (lines 938-1384) the fox becomes a quite obvious symbol of Burghley's imperiousness, avarice, and nepotism. It is not surprising that, for this and other imprudences, the *Complaints* volume was "called in" or suppressed, and that Spenser did not adventure further along this congenial but most dangerous path.<sup>16</sup>

Colin  
Clout's  
Come  
Home  
Again

His next poem is in very different tone, and is, after the *Epithalamion*, his most attractive work. Though not printed till 1595, it is prefaced by a letter to Raleigh, dated from the poet's Irish home, Kilcolman Castle, December 27, 1591. It is his acknowledgment of thanks to Sir Walter, who had been his sponsor in the momentous English journey of 1589-90. The author

<sup>14</sup> Lines 717-793.

<sup>15</sup> Lines 891-914.

<sup>16</sup> See Brice Harris, "The Ape in *Mother Hubbard's Tale*," *HLQ*, IV (1941), 191-203. There were few imitations of *Mother Hubbard's Tale*. Perhaps *The Flea* (1605) by Peter Woodhouse (Grosart, *Occasional Issues*, III, 1877) may be so regarded. It is likewise in riming couplets and handles a debate between an elephant and a flea, but its political purpose is not easily discernible.

of the *Faerie Queene* here lays off his singing robes and reverts to the humble character of Colin Clout, safe in Ireland again among his shepherd mates, to whom he describes the great things and persons he has seen. The instinct for form, which seldom fails Spenser, has chosen for *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* a pentameter quatrain of rustic type and language in keeping with it. The rimes never obtrude and the rime-scheme is visible only to the consciously searching eye. As often as not, one stanza flows without a break into the next, and the flow is so easy that perhaps the author himself did not observe that his second stanza contains but three lines. Primarily, his purpose is to pay his compliments to Raleigh, the "Shepherd of the Ocean," whose meeting with Spenser in Munster, companionship on the voyage, and patronage at court are delightfully narrated. But he also thanks the queen for her favors to him in three passages of skilful adulation,<sup>17</sup> and offers handsome tributes to the courtly poets and court ladies he had met. The pastoral note is admirably sustained, better perhaps than in *Lycidas*, and *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* is equally important as poetic autobiography, though far less sublime than Milton's pastoral. It gives the impression that Spenser was now happy in Ireland and had honestly abjured the enticements of courtly ambition. It ends in philosophic mood, with a Platonic praise of true love and a reassertion of Colin's loyalty to the loved and lost Rosalind.

Spenser's *Astrophel*, printed in the same volume as *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, is the first of a group of poems by various authors on Sidney's death. Though published later, it was most likely composed earlier than Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, but is in the same stanza and figuratively represents Sir Philip's wound as caused, like Adonis's, by a tusked beast.

*Astrophel*

The poignant disquisition on love and the sentimental memories of Rosalind with which *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* concludes suggest that the poet's homecoming, pleasant as it evidently was for him, was not unmarred by loneliness. A year later he knew that he was enamoured of an English girl, Elizabeth Boyle,<sup>18</sup> who had come to Ireland with her brother and settled near Youghal on the coast, some thirty miles from Kilcolman. The account of the wooing and marriage in *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion*, published together early in 1595, has the same autobiographical forthrightness as *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, and, of course, much greater depth of feeling. The courtship was not easy. Suing, in any sense, was hard for Spenser; the girl was proud and much his junior, and her family seem to have had considerable ambitions for her. The fourth sonnet of the *Amoretti* is dated by internal evidence January 1, 1593. In the nineteenth "the merry cuckoo, messenger of spring," has commenced to sing; in the twenty-second Lent has begun. The sixtieth sonnet notes that the poet has been in love a year; the sixty-second speaks of New Year, 1594, the sixty-

*Elizabeth Boyle*

*Amoretti*

<sup>17</sup> Lines 233-263, 332-351, 590-647.

<sup>18</sup> See W. H. Weply, "Spenser and Elizabeth Boyle," *LTLS*, May 24, 1923, pp. 355, 356; and R. Heffner, "Edmund Spenser's Family," *HLQ*, II (1938), 79-84.

eighth of Easter, and the seventieth of May Day. The marriage took place on St. Barnaby's Day, June 11, which by the Old Style calendar was the longest of the year.

In all these sonnets except the eighth, which is of the usual "Shakespearean" kind, Spenser employs his special form of linked quatrains, *ababbcbccdcdee*, which he had already used in the *Visions of the World's Vanity* and the Dedication to *Virgil's Gnat*. As regards content, the sequence divides into three unequal parts: Sonnets 1-62, dealing with unrequited love; Sonnets 63-84, dealing with the lovers' happiness; and Sonnets 85-88, dealing with the lovers' brief separation, before their marriage. The last section includes also four little lyrics on Cupid, in the manner of the Greek Anthology, which are merely finger-exercises or preludes to the great *crescendo* of *Epithalamion*.

It is naturally the second group that matters most. The first sixty-two sonnets all report a negative result, and the experience of an unencouraged lover is capable of so little variation as to forbid surprise at the discovery that many of Spenser's ideas have been expressed before.<sup>19</sup> They have not often been so resourcefully illustrated. It is interesting in this group to study the poet's dabbling with the metaphysical conceit, commonly defined as a phase of the reaction against him; and, quite apart from content, admiration is extorted by the Gothic lightness of structure in such a sonnet as No. 56, which in form parallels Shakespeare's No. 73: "That time of year thou mayst in me behold."

No. 64 records the first kiss, and the twenty that follow this have such a grounding in actual incident and true emotion as makes them equal to the best of Sidney's. Some of these—the prayer for Easter Day (68), the one on the girl's needlework (71) and her Christian name (74), for example—need but to be mentioned. A less outstanding instance (67), dealing with the climax of the courtship, deserves quotation, because so few poets and lovers have been able to write so like a gentleman:

Like as a huntsman after weary chase,  
Seeing the game from him escapt away,  
Sits down to rest him in some shady place,  
With panting hounds beguiled of their prey.  
So, after long pursuit and vain assay,  
When I all weary had the chase forsook,  
The gentle deer return'd the selfsame way,  
Thinking to quench her thirst at the next brook.  
There she, beholding me with milder look,  
Sought not to fly, but fearless still did bide,  
Till I in hand her yet half-trembling took,  
And with her own good will her firmly tied.  
Strange thing, me seem'd, to see a beast so wild  
So goodly won, with her own will beguil'd.

<sup>19</sup> See J. G. Scott, "The Sources of Spenser's *Amoretti*," *MLR*, xxii (1927). 189-195; E. Casady, "The Neo-Platonic Ladder in Spenser's *Amoretti*," *PQ*, xx (1941). 284-295.

Spenser's marriage, when finally arranged, was hurriedly performed. The *Epithalamion*<sup>20</sup> is his gift to his bride and to himself. "I unto myself alone will sing," says he; but the song has been his most universal passport to posterity. The *Faerie Queene* is not always or in all respects admired, but the superiority of the *Epithalamion* to everything else in its class would hardly be disputed. It differs from the other marriage hymns in its larger melodic range, for Spenser has here used the total resources of his musical power. It differs also in its broader humanity, for in its twenty-three strophes some twenty hours of an Irish day are registered with a vividness that never fades. Perhaps it differs most of all in striking the nearly unattainable line between too hot and too cold. Flesh has just its proper place, and Platonism also. It may seem trifling praise to say that, whatever codes of conduct come and go, the *Epithalamion* is always in good taste, but that can be said of few other marriage odes.

The *Prothalamion* is one of the casual results of Spenser's visit to London in 1596 to see Books iv-vi of the *Faerie Queene* through the press. *Epithalamion* had been printed the year before; and it is evident that the Earl of Worcester, who had to provide a state wedding for his two daughters, the Ladies Elizabeth and Katherine Somerset, took advantage of the poet's presence at court to commission him to write a marriage poem like the other for this occasion. The earl got extraordinary value for his money. He got an extremely great poem, less than half the length of *Epithalamion*, but even more exquisitely proportioned. However, the emotion of the earlier work could not be reproduced, and Spenser made no slightest effort to do so. The brides are pretty lay-figures, likened to white swans, and are only individualized in one mediocre pun on their family name: "Yet were they bred of *Summer's-heat*, they say." The bridegrooms barely rate a mention in the last stanza. What the wise poet and the foolish courtier does is to express his own emotion at being again in London, walking beside the Thames. The spousal interest is delicately dismissed in the opening lines, in which Spenser airs once more his long-standing grievance against courts:

Calm was the day . . .  
 When I, whom sullen care,  
 Through discontent of my long fruitless stay  
 In prince's court, and expectation vain  
 Of idle hopes, which still do fly away  
 Like empty shadows, did afflict my brain,<sup>21</sup>  
 Walk'd forth to ease my pain  
 Along the shores of silver-streaming Thames.

At the close, in the lines that everyone remembers best, he lingers over his associations with "merry London, my most kindly nurse," and with the dead Leicester and the living Essex. It was hardly possible for Spenser to

<sup>20</sup> Ed. C. Van Winkle (1926).

<sup>21</sup> The meaning is: "I whose brain sullen care . . . afflicted."

The Four  
Hymns

be ungraceful, and the pretty symbolism of the brides-elect is charmingly brought in; but it has never been much more than floral background.

The *Four Hymns*,<sup>22</sup> prefaced by an interesting letter to the Countesses of Cumberland and Warwick which Spenser dated from Greenwich (where the court was) on September 1, 1596, were printed in the same year and are one of the latest publications of his lifetime. In them he attempts a formal statement of the idealistic philosophy, of pagan-Christian blend and neo-Platonic pattern, which is suffused over the whole of the *Faerie Queene*. They are more poetic than systematic. The letter explains that the first two poems, on the pagan theory of love and beauty, had been written "in the greener times of my youth," but when one of the sister-countesses had urged him to suppress them, he had been unable to do so by reason of the number of manuscript copies in circulation, and so resolved

at least to amend and by way of retractation to reform them, making instead of those two hymns of earthly or natural love and beauty two others of heavenly and celestial.

This retraction sounds like the one in which Chaucer disavows his book of Troilus and the *Canterbury Tales*, and may have been suggested by it. Spenser had less cause to renounce the morality of the two earlier hymns, and if he had indeed outgrown them, he would not have inserted a recapitulation of the *Hymn in Honor of Love* in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*<sup>23</sup> or concerned himself with such lovely heresies as the Garden of Adonis passage in the *Faerie Queene*.<sup>24</sup> The probability is that, having at no very "green" period written these two digests of Platonism and wishing to publish them, he apprehended that his pious patronesses might not be edified by such reverent treatment of pagan gods and philosophers, and so added the Christian counterparts to float, not submerge them.<sup>25</sup>

The four Hymns are in particularly delicate and accomplished rime royal, which is made to lend itself perfectly to abstruse exposition. The first two, not very clearly distinguished in content, start from the notion that love is born of beauty as Cupid was of Venus, develop the conception of love as the prime creative force (as in Plato's *Symposium*), and then pass, in the *Hymn to Beauty*, to the demonstration of man's moral progress through the love of beauty at its successive levels. In the *Hymn of Heavenly Love*, Christ replaces Cupid as creative love, and this poem, the least successful of the four, becomes a rationalization of the Fall and Redemption, a sort of *Paradise Lost* in little. In *Heavenly Beauty* the Platonic ladder is set up against the edifice of Christian theology, and the Platonic "idea" is identified

<sup>22</sup> Ed. L. Winstanley (Cambridge, 1930). See R. W. Lee, "Castiglione's Influence on Spenser's Early Hymns," *PQ*, vii (1928), 65-77.

<sup>23</sup> Lines 835-894.

<sup>24</sup> Book III, canto vi. See J. W. Bennett, "Spenser's Garden of Adonis Revisited," *JEGP*, xli (1942), 53-78, and discussion, *ibid.*, pp. 492-9.

<sup>25</sup> See J. W. Bennett, "The Theme of Spenser's *Four Hymns*," *SP*, xxviii (1931), 18-57, and "Addenda," *SP*, xxxii (1935), 131-157; F. M. Padelford, "Spenser's *Four Hymns*, a Re-survey," *SP*, xxix (1932), 207-252.



with the ineffable presence of God, which the soul inspired by heavenly beauty climbs to through gradual apprehension of His various works (lines 127-133).

Spenser retracted nothing in the later Hymns, which are essentially as Greek as the earlier ones, and not much hampered by the new medium into which the doctrine has been translated. "For all that's good is beautiful and fair"<sup>26</sup> is the kernel of his thought, and the grand summary at the close of *Heavenly Beauty* (lines 267-87) is as frank neo-Platonism, or rather, as pure Platonism, as anything in the earlier pair. The conception of love and beauty as a gradual infusion is one of the points that distinguish Spenser from that other Hellenist, Marlowe, who stressed intuitive genius. In the second Hymn he categorically denies the Dead Shepherd's yet unpublished cliché:

For all that like the beauty which they see  
Straight do not love; for love is not so light  
As straight to burn at first beholder's sight.<sup>27</sup>

Spenser's chief prose work, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, was provisionally entered for publication on April 14, 1598, and was probably composed while the author was in England in 1596.<sup>28</sup> A number of manuscript copies circulated, but it was not printed till long after (1633), when Sir James Ware brought it out in conjunction with the briefer *History of Ireland* written in 1571 by Edmund Campion, the Jesuit martyr.<sup>29</sup> Spenser's treatise, containing over 60,000 words, is a well-planned dialogue on Irish laws, customs, and military government. In the character of Irenius, who is represented as having recently arrived from Ireland, he gives his own opinions, which are well ventilated and interpreted by the intelligent interlocutor, Eudoxus. The latter has plenty to say and does not merely serve, as the second speaker does in too many "Platonic" discourses, as the means of dividing a long disquisition into its component parts. The prose style is very fine, simple in syntax and vocabulary, but with a periodic roll that marks it for the prose of a poet; as in Irenius's condemnation of the social influence of the Irish bards:

It is most true that such poets as in their writings do labor to better the manners of men, and through the sweet bait of their numbers to steal into young spirits a desire of honor and virtue, are worthy to be had in great respect. But these Irish bards are for the most part of another mind, and so far from instructing young men in moral discipline, that they themselves do more deserve to be sharply disciplined; for they seldom use to choose unto themselves the doings of good men for the ornaments of their poems, but whomsoever they find to be most licentious of life, most bold and lawless in his doings, most dangerous

<sup>26</sup> *Hymn of Heavenly Beauty*, line 133.

<sup>27</sup> Lines 208-210.

<sup>28</sup> Ed. W. L. Renwick (1934). See R. B. Gottfried, "The Date of Spenser's *View*," *MLN*, LIII (1937). 176-180; "Spenser as an Historian in Prose," *Trans. Wis. Acad.*, xxx (1938). 317-330; "Irish Geography in Spenser's *View*," *ELH*, vi (1939). 114-137; R. Heffner, "Spenser's *View of Ireland*: Some Observations," *MLQ*, III (1942). 507-515.

<sup>29</sup> Ed. R. B. Gottfried (*Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints*, 1940).

and desperate in all parts of disobedience and rebellious disposition, him they set up and glorify in their rimes, him they praise to the people, and to young men make an example to follow.

Two-thirds of the essay express the sympathetic interest with which Spenser had studied the antiquities, art, and customs of the island;<sup>30</sup> but critics, with the *mauvaise honte* that always afflicts Anglo-Saxons when discipline for Ireland is in question, have habitually condemned the brutality of the *View*. The poet defends in the most downright way the severe practices of his old chief, Lord Grey, and asserts that present reform, must be "by the sword," promising that it can be achieved by 11,000 soldiers in a year and a half. He advocates group removal of disloyal population to another part of the country and systematic starvation to check outlaws. He proposes mercy for the mean and submissive, but none for the great rebels like Tyrone. He deplores the Queen's soft-heartedness and the irresolution of many of her governors, and waxes angry over the contrast between the self-sacrifice of the Popish priests and the hedonism of many Protestant pastors:

It is great wonder to see the odds which is between the zeal of Popish priests and the ministers of the gospel; for they spare not to come out of Spain, from Rome, and from Rheims, by long toil and dangerous travel hither, where they know peril of death awaiteth them, and no reward nor riches is to be found, only to draw the people to the Church of Rome; whereas some of our idle ministers, having a way for credit and estimation thereby opened unto them, and having the livings of the country offered them without pains and without peril, will neither for the same, nor for any love of God, nor zeal of religion, nor for all the good they might do by winning of so many souls to God, be drawn forth from their warm nests and their sweet loves' side to look out into God's harvest, which is even ready for the sickle, and all the fields yellow long ago. Doubtless those good old godly Fathers will (I fear me) rise up in the Day of Judgment to condemn them.

#### *Revolt in Ireland*

Those who cleave to the conception of the "gentle Spenser" are pained by these views, and do not admit the right of a man residing on a volcano to resent the encouragement of its activities. Four months after his book had been ineffectively registered in London, "upon condition that he get further authority before it be printed," Tyrone struck again. All Munster rose in unexpected tumult. Kilcolman was destroyed, and very likely some important portions of the *Faerie Queene*; but the *View of the Present State of Ireland* was signally vindicated. Spenser, now Sheriff of Cork, was sent to London in December, 1598, with official despatches concerning the revolt. There, apparently in the last month of his life, he wrote the "Brief Note of Ireland," which is an appeal on behalf of the sufferers from the insurrection.<sup>31</sup> He minces no words, demanding that the Queen protect and

<sup>30</sup> For the possible influence of Irish poetry on Spenser's own see P. Henley, *Spenser in Ireland* (Cork, 1928).

<sup>31</sup> A. B. Grosart, *Works of Spenser* (1884), I. 537-555.



avenge her subjects, openly declaring his doubts of her "wonted merciful mind"; and ends with a logical *précis*: "Certain points to be considered of in the recovery of the realm of Ireland." This paper, first printed by Grosart, was unknown to Landor when he wrote the imaginary conversation between Essex and Spenser, portraying the latter as a broken and despondent man.

Spenser died at Westminster, January 13, 1599, doubtless a victim of the tensions he had been under.<sup>32</sup> He was about forty-seven years old, and quite at the height of his career both as poet and as public official. His sons, whom he had given the pioneering names of Sylvanus and Peregrine, returned to his Irish estates, which Spenser's works show that he loved quite as much as he feared, and they populated that country with his posterity. In time these doubtless became undistinguished, for nothing is less like the Sheriff of Cork and delineator of Prince Arthur than the epitaph of one of them:

*Spenser's  
Death*

Here lies the body of Edmond Spenser, great-great-grandson of the poet Spenser. Unfortunate from his cradle to his grave.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> See W. I. Zeitler, "The Date of Spenser's Death," *MLN*, XLIII (1928), 322-324; R. Heffner, "Did Spenser Die in Poverty?" *MLN*, XLVIII (1933), 221-226; J. W. Bennett, "Did Spenser Starve?" *MLN*, LII (1937), 400-401.

<sup>33</sup> Kilcolman was sold in 1736 for the debts of Spenser's great-grandson; see H. Wood, "Spenser's Great-grandson," *LTLS*, Feb. 14, 1929.

# X

## The Faerie Queene: The Spenserians

### Form and Purpose of the Faerie Queene

### The Early Plan

The opalescent and kaleidoscopic quality in the *Faerie Queene*, which is the delight of the sympathetic reader and despair of the critic, is not solely due to its allegorical character or to the variety of models that Spenser drew from: Ariosto, Chaucer, Malory, etc.<sup>1</sup> It results also from important changes in the poet's purpose, particularly during the ten-year period in which the first three books were incubating. The letters that passed between Spenser and Harvey show that in April, 1580, he had already submitted a considerable section of the work for his friend's criticism. At this time he was attempting to emulate or "overgo" the *Orlando Furioso*,<sup>2</sup> and Harvey's judgment was wholly unfavorable. Probably the *Faerie Queene* was never greatly to the latter's taste, for the commendatory verses he wrote for the edition of 1590 are not fervent; but something more than critical distrust may have lain behind the urgency with which, in 1580, he bade his protégé desist. The young man seems to have been contemplating propagandist poetry of the most flagrant kind, in which Leicester, typified as Prince Arthur, should achieve Gloriana by his matchless exploits, and then, ruling as King Arthur, should with her lead Fairyland to triumph over the Paynim King (Philip II) in the Armageddon that every one foresaw. This is the apparent promise of the vision Arthur has (i. ix. st. 13, 14) and the purpose of Una's advice to the Queen to make the most of her opportunity (st. 16.):

O happy Queen of Fairies, that hast found,  
 'Mongst many, one that with his prowess may  
 Defend thine honor and thy foes confound!  
 True loves are often sown, but seldom grow on ground.

So ardent does Spenser become in anticipation of the international theme that the fight of the Red Cross Knight with the dragon seems secondary to him, and he prays his muse to reserve her strength for the greater subject (i. xi. 7):

<sup>1</sup> Consult *Faerie Queene*, Variorum Ed.; J. Spens, *Spenser's Faerie Queene: An Interpretation* (1934); E. Greenlaw, *Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory* (Baltimore, 1932); C. B. Millican, *Spenser and the Table Round* (Cambridge, Mass., 1932); J. H. Walter, "The Faerie Queene, Alterations and Structure," *MLR*, xxxvi (1941), 37-58; "Further Notes," *MLR*, xxxviii (1943), 1-10; and especially J. W. Bennett, *The Evolution of the Faerie Queene* (Chicago, 1942).

<sup>2</sup> See R. E. N. Dodge, "Spenser's Imitations from Ariosto," *PMLA*, xii (1897), 151-204, with supplement by the same, *PMLA*, xxxv (1920), 91-92, and by A. H. Gilbert, *PMLA*, xxxiv (1919), 225-232; S. J. McMurphy, "Spenser's Use of Ariosto for Allegory," *Univ. Washington Pub.*, ii (1924), 1-54.

Fair goddess, lay that furious fit aside,  
 Till I of war and bloody Mars do sing,  
 And Briton fields with Saracen blood be-dyed,  
 'Twixt that great Faery Queen and Paynim King,  
 That with their horror heaven and earth did ring,  
 A work of labor long and endless praise:  
 But now a while let down that haughty string,  
 And to my tunes thy second tenor raise,  
 That I this man of God his godly arms may blaze.

And the muse cannot but be thinking of the Armada beacons of 1588 in her description of the dragon's eyes (st. 14).

Leicester's prospect of becoming king-consort had really dwindled to nothing by 1580; and when he died in 1588 a great deal of recasting must have been done, of which a trace remains in the curious obituary lines tacked to the end of the first mention of Prince Arthur and his armor (I. vii. st. 36):

But when he died, the Fairy Queen it brought  
 To Fairyland, where yet it may be seen, if sought.

Meantime, Spenser's growing acquaintance with Tasso, whose *Jerusalem Delivered* was first published in 1581, besides lending him inspiration for specific passages,<sup>3</sup> must have deepened the moral and crusading element in the *Faerie Queene*. His poem was probably in a complete welter when Raleigh arrived in Ireland, and it might never have been printed, if that magnetic person had not talked poetry with Spenser and enlisted him in his own scheme to assail court favor and the Queen's vanity once more.

*Raleigh's  
Influence*

The open letter to Raleigh on the poem's "whole intention," which was added (Jan. 23, 1590) as the first three books were going through the press, is not to be taken too literally. It was prepared for the occasion, and like any author's preface makes the design appear much more logical and complete than it was. It exaggerates the Aristotelian element, which is mainly to be found in Book II, and changes Arthur from a political-campaign portrait of Leicester as Protestant leader and king-to-be into "Magnificence," the philosophical summation of all Aristotle's virtues, private and public. It is easy to be ambitious in a preface, and Spenser rapidly sketches a plan to develop the three books he has written into a twelve-book epic, with an airy promise that, on proper encouragement, he will write twelve further books on the political virtues. One need not worry over the fact that this plan contains several basic inconsistencies, and fits Book I much better than Books II and III. It was camouflage, and Spenser, in proceeding with his work, seems to have paid little attention to it, or indeed to Aristotle. John Florio ignored it, and still saw in the first half of the *Faerie Queene* Spenser's quixotic loyalty to the dead Leicester. In dedicating his own *Second Fruits*

*The Letter  
to Raleigh*

<sup>3</sup> See H. H. Blanchard, "Imitations from Tasso in the *Faerie Queene*," *SP*, xxii (1925), 198-221; C. B. Beall, "A Tasso Imitation in Spenser," *MLQ*, III (1942), 559-560.

the next year (1591) Florio mentioned the great earl, whom "every miscreant Myrmidon dare strike, being dead," and continued:

But nor I nor this place may half suffice for his praise, which the sweetest singer of all our western shepherds hath so exquisitely depainted that . . . I account him thrice-fortunate in having such a herald of his virtues as Spenser. Courteous Lord, courteous Spenser! I know not which hath purchased more fame: either he in deserving so well of so famous a scholar, or so famous a scholar in being so thankful without hope of requital to so famous a lord.<sup>4</sup>

*The  
Allegory*

The "continued allegory or dark conceit," as Spenser calls it—that is, the politico-theological purpose of the poem—is now too confused for lucid interpretation. It is one of the effective elements in its rich texture, and is not to be ignored, but the threads cannot be clearly followed. The letter to Raleigh stresses two other elements that more immediately recommended the work at the time, and that are indeed among its salient beauties; namely, its ethical motive, "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline," and its intention to praise Queen Elizabeth through Gloriana and Belphoebe, in her two embodiments as monarch and as woman.

*Spenser's  
Ethics*

Spenser is preëminently a moral poet. His disapproval, in the passage previously quoted, of the laudation of outlaw heroes by the Irish bards is fundamental. The object of his own poem is to make vice ugly and virtue attractive. No other poet has painted with more terrible truth the images of Despair, Slander, Care, Envy, and Detraction, the Blatant Beast of Scandal, and the brazen dragon of Sin. These are academic abstractions to nobody who has come to grips with life. To Spenser and the men of his age, to all the noble spirits to whom since the *Faerie Queene* has been an inspiration next only to the Bible and Shakespeare, these things have counted among the most significant forces in the world. And, on the other hand, nothing in all his poetry is more stirring than the great *catena* of passages, the

goodly golden chain, wherewith yfere  
The virtues linked are in lovely wise,

that gives emotional unity to the book and describes the moral weapons with which his warriors fight: generosity, for example, in the passage just referred to (i. ix. 1), or "simple truth and blameless chastity" (iv. viii. 30), or aid to the weak (v. ii. 1):

Nought is more honorable to a knight,  
Ne better doth besem brave chivalry,  
Than to defend the feeble in their right,  
And wrong redress in such as wend awry;

<sup>4</sup> A century later, Dryden, in his *Essay on Satire* (1693), had the same understanding of the poem's original purpose, though he mistakenly equated Arthur with Sidney rather than Leicester: "But Prince Arthur, or his chief patron, Sir Philip Sidney, whom he intended to make happy by the marriage of his Gloriana, dying before him, deprived the poet both of means and spirit to accomplish his design." See, however, Mrs. Bennett's different interpretation in *The Evolution of the Faerie Queene*, pp. 80-100.

or the power of justice (v. xi. 1), or self-control (ii. v. 15, vi. i. 41), or courtesy (vi. ii. 1):

What virtue is so fitting for a knight,  
Or for a lady whom a knight should love,  
As courtesy, to bear themselves aright  
To all of each degree, as doth behove?

or concord (which Shakespeare calls "degree"), that most worshipped safeguard of nations and families, "Mother of blessed peace and friendship true" (iv. x. 34, 35):

By her the heaven is in his course contained,  
And all the world in state unmoved stands,  
As their Almighty Maker first ordained,  
And bound them with inviolable bands.

The praise of Elizabeth is a lower thing, but where was mortal ever so sweetly praised? It, too, gilds and unifies the poem, and better than anything else that has survived illustrates the influence that this strange woman had in all the mighty labors which "live with the eternity of her fame." *Praise of the Queen*

It might be hard to say who originated the idea that the *Faerie Queene* is dull. It was a late idea which few readers in the sixteenth or seventeenth century would have understood, but Macaulay gave it currency by a careless excursus in his essay on Bunyan: *The Story*

Nay, even Spenser himself, though assuredly one of the greatest poets that ever lived, could not succeed in the attempt to make allegory interesting. . . . One unpardonable fault, the fault of tediousness, pervades the whole of the *Faerie Queene*.<sup>5</sup>

Allegory, forsooth! If the *Faerie Queene* is allegorical, so in their different ways are *Hamlet* and *Tom Jones* and the Book of Job; so is all great fiction and most poetry. Spenser's fairyland is no mystic fantasy, but a true picture of the democracy of life. His men and women pursue their careers through ever fresh and apparently unpremeditated incidents, resisting or yielding to the natural temptations they encounter, performing their heroisms and their meannesses; lost sometimes for long series of cantos to the reader, but always reappearing in the natural progress of events, never hurried on to forced conclusions, always advancing from task to task in the simple human way. While life lasts, interest continues and duty drives. The Red Cross Knight accomplishes early his great devoir. He slays the dragon and wins his lady, but wedding bells do not sweep him off the stage. The later books see him again and again, following his godly course, bearing modestly his laurels, aiding his friends, resisting his foes, and losing little of his interest although he never again has a central position.

<sup>5</sup> See H. C. Notcutt, "The *Faerie Queene* and its Critics," *E&S*, xii (1926). 63-86.

For variety of character and incident and even for skill of structure the *Faerie Queene* is remarkable in the world's fiction; but these merits appear least in the first two books, which, despite their more colorful style<sup>6</sup> and the brilliance of individual scenes, lack the fluidity of movement and economy of effect that Spenser grew to. If one compares the description of Lucifera's "coach" in i. iv. 16-37 with the procession of seasons in the second Mutability canto (vii. vii. 28-46), one sees how much more is done with nineteen stanzas in the later passage than with twenty-two in the earlier.

The third book is a good example of the poet's method. It is entitled the book of Chastity, and concerns itself almost wholly with the aspect of life involved in the consideration of that virtue and its opposite. The first three cantos and the last two deal chiefly with the exploits of Britomart, the titular heroine of the book, but in none of the intermediate seven cantos is she the main figure. Thus the beautiful legend of Britomart is thrown round the book like the hoops about a bulging cask. But Britomart is for Spenser more than a symbol of chastity, and her destiny carries her beyond the limits of the book to which she gives her name. So chastity is too manifold in its human variations to be the embellishment of a single individual. It reveals itself in the third book in many types of women: in the knightly Britomart, seeking with passionate longing the just Sir Artegal; and quite differently in the huntress Belphebe, vowed to Diana and immune from human love, yet softly human in her ministrations to the wounded squire, and human also in the pique she feels when Timias shows sentiment for another maid. Again chastity is glorified in the virgin wife Amoret, kidnaped on her wedding day and resisting the superhuman torments and temptations of her captor; and once more in Florimel, the charming lady of the court, whose pretty story shoots like a gold thread through all the rainbow colors of the third, fourth, and fifth books as she braves the terrors of forest and sea to save her reluctant lover Marinell.

It is no lotus-land that Spenser creates. With all the lovely virtue there is little oversweetness in his poem. The woods are full of loathly foresters, the sea has its lewd fishermen, and knightly armor often hides the poltroon and deceiver. In two cantos of Book III, with Italianesque realism, he sets off his pictures of chastity by the unchaste story of the gay Lothario, Sir Paridel, the jealous Malbecco, and the wanton Hellenore. They fill in the picture of life, and the greatness of the book shows in this, that Paridel and Hellenore seem as genuinely native to the story, as thoroughly entitled to their existence, as Britomart herself.

So, then, the poem moves, one of the truest Human Comedies and one of the most beautiful. Still beginning, never ending, character is added to character, incident to incident, as our motley life flows past the windows of Kilcolman Castle. Here, if ever, is art concealing art; every episode seems to

<sup>6</sup> See J. V. Fletcher, "Some Observations on the Changing Style of the *Faerie Queene*," *SP*, xxxi (1934), 152-159.



grow to its perfection as inconspicuously as if the sun and rain of heaven fostered it, and one caught by the witchery of this narrative may at times be tempted to blaspheme against the other great gods of Parnassus. Even Chaucer's art may look puerile, and beside the tidal flow of Spenser even the great dramatist's method, with its spotlights and overhaste, may sometimes seem like tinsel against moonlight.

Spenser, of course, has his conventions, as the artist must; but they are conventions that enlarge instead of cramping. Fairyland is one.<sup>7</sup> His characters are fairies, Britons, Moslems, dwarfs, enchanters, savage men—all the masques the heart of man can wear; but the masques never conceal the real men and women. They impress us as beautiful externals, as so many gorgeous costumes of the soul. Another convention is the knightly quest, which enabled him to bring his story out of doors into the Irish plains and forests.<sup>8</sup> The paths of Fairyland are the main-traveled roads of Elizabethan Ireland, and the descriptions are some of the best in English poetry; as of Una meeting the girl with the pot of water on the grassy path beneath the mountain (I. iii. 10-12), or Florimel coming at nightfall to the witch's dwelling "in a gloomy hollow glen" (III. vii. 4-6), or old Melibœe entertaining Calidore in his "cottage clad with loam" (VI. ix. 16-17). The poem is notably full of hunting scenes and of dogs—from bull-baiting mastiffs (II. viii. 42; VI. vii. 47) to the scavenger hounds by the roadside (VI. xi. 17)—and, above all, of the small things of nature, the gnats and flies and little birds, in which Spenser had a special interest.

*Spenser's  
Conventions*

Ben Jonson, who was a professed grammarian and classicist, resented Spenser's archaisms and asserted that he "writ no language."<sup>9</sup> The proper reply is that if Spenser had written the *Faerie Queene* in Esperanto and therein achieved the expressiveness the poem has, Esperanto would be a very great poetic language. But Spenser did not write Esperanto; he wrote, in all his works except the *Shepherd's Calendar* and the *Faerie Queene* (where his design required archaism), the very purest of pure English. He is the arch-priest of the movement against the inkhorn terms which were corrupting as well as enlarging the Renaissance vocabulary. It was one of the passions of his life, which he may have imbibed at the Merchant Taylors' School from Mulcaster,<sup>10</sup> to keep his English undefiled. Yet the stock of words had undoubtedly grown trite and flat in the sixteenth century, and was inadequate to the expanding range of ideas. Where others supplied deficiencies by importations from the classics and modern foreign tongues, Spenser proposed to dig deeper into the native stores. The *Shepherd's Calendar* offers a series of experiments to this end. It is open to any critic to regret that Spenser did

*Spenser's  
Language*

<sup>7</sup> See Isabel E. Rathborne, *The Meaning of Spenser's Fairyland* (1937).

<sup>8</sup> See M. M. Gray, "The Influence of Spenser's Irish Experiences on the *Faerie Queene*," *RES*, VI (1930), 413-428.

<sup>9</sup> "Spenser in affecting the ancients writ no language. Yet I would have him read for his matter" (*Discoveries*).

<sup>10</sup> See ch. v, above, and C. B. Millican, "Note on Mulcaster and Spenser," *ELH*, VI (1939), 214-216.



not possess a modern professor's equipment in Middle English, but it is hardly possible to deny that his idea was sound.<sup>11</sup>

The archaisms in the *Faerie Queene* make little trouble. There is no page of the poem that is not easier for a child to understand than a page of *Paradise Lost*. Yet the archaic flavor is strongly present, and two practical reasons for it may be suggested. It is needed to fit the language to the antique atmosphere of the story. Milton raised the style of his epic by Latinism; Spenser secured a like effect, in a way better suited to his theme and temper, by reminiscence of Chaucer. Neither poem would be tolerable in Basic English. Spenser, moreover, had a problem which Milton quite escaped: the bondage of rime. The stanza he had committed himself to necessitated four-fold, treble, and double riming almost *ad infinitum*; and his stock of rime-words would have become hopelessly tedious within a single book, if he had not freshened it with new coinages. The most sufficient statement about the language of the *Faerie Queene* was made, very briefly and long ago, by Barrett Wendell:<sup>12</sup>

You may despair as much as you like over the pre-Quixotic intricacies of its tenuous plot; you may lose your way, again and again, in futile efforts to follow the invisible thread of its allegories; you may lay the book down, more than once or twice, dazed for the moment with the sweetness of its melody; but you may search it almost in vain for the page, for the stanza, even for the line, which is not alive to this day with the very soul of Elizabethan music. Such mastery of language, turning into deathless beauty words and phrases which had seemed fit only for humdrum use, English had never before approached; and that mastery has never been surpassed. Indeed, one can hardly imagine that it ever will be.

Spenser's  
Imitators:  
1. Drayton

Nothing in Elizabethan literature, perhaps nothing until Byron's time, equaled the over-night fame of the *Faerie Queene*.<sup>13</sup> Spenser became at once "the only living Homer" and the supreme literary celebrity of the age. One of his earliest imitators is Richard Barnfield,<sup>14</sup> but Michael Drayton was as early and of more significance. The latter's elegy to Henry Reynolds contains the well-known tribute to the "grave moral Spenser,"

Than whom I am persuaded there was none,  
Since the blind bard his *Iliads* up did make,

<sup>11</sup> See E. F. Pope, "Renaissance Criticism and the Diction of the *Faerie Queene*," *PMLA*, xli (1926), 575-619; B. R. McElderry, "Archaism and Innovation in Spenser's Poetic Diction," *PMLA*, xlvii (1932), 144-170; F. M. Padelford, "Aspects of Spenser's Vocabulary," *PQ*, xx (1941), 279-283. Also W. L. Renwick, "The Critical Origins of Spenser's Diction," *MLR*, xvii (1922), 1-16, and H. C. Wyld, "Spenser's Diction and Style in Relation to Those of Later English Poetry," in *A Grammatical Miscellany offered to Otto Jespersen* (Copenhagen, 1930, pp. 147-165).

<sup>12</sup> *The Temper of the Seventeenth Century in English Literature* (1904), p. 25.

<sup>13</sup> See H. E. Cory, "The Golden Age of the Spenserian Pastoral," *PMLA*, xxv (1910), 241-267; and "Spenser, the School of the Fletchers, and Milton," *Univ. California Pub. in Mod. Phil.*, ii (1912), 311-373. *Godfrey of Bulloigne*, a fine translation of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* by Edward Fairfax (d. 1635), was published in 1599-1600, just after Spenser's death, and owes much to his example.

<sup>14</sup> See above, ch. II.

Fitter a task like that to undertake,  
To set down boldly, bravely to invent,  
In all high knowledge surely excellent.

It was Spenser's pastorals that Drayton, writing under the pseudonym of "Rowland," began by echoing in *The Shepherd's Garland* (1593), a group of nine eclogues prefaced<sup>15</sup> by the statement:

Master Edmund Spenser had done enough for the immortality of his name, had he only given us his *Shepherds' Calendar*, a masterpiece if any . . . Spenser is the prime pastoralist of England. My pastorals hold upon a new strain, must speak for themselves.

It is true that Drayton's discipleship, though marked, is not slavish; and Spenser seems to have acknowledged the newcomer's promise by placing him at the end of a list of poets in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*:

And there, though last not least, is Aetion;  
A gentler shepherd may nowhere be found,  
Whose muse, full of high thoughts' invention,  
Doth like himself heroically sound.<sup>16</sup>

In his two finest odes, *To the Virginian Voyage* and the *Ballad of Agincourt*, Drayton repeats Spenser's note of romantic patriotism, as he does in *Poly-Olbion*; and he follows him again in his four long mythological or sylvan poems: *Nymphidia*, *The Quest of Cynthia*, *The Shepherd's Sirena*, and *The Muses' Elysium*. In the *Nymphidia*, which is probably Drayton's most charming work, he accomplishes the remarkable feat of imitating Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Spenser, all three, without loss to the poem's individuality. The mock-heroic manner is from the *Rime of Sir Thopas*, the fairy lore from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the narrative method from the *Faerie Queene*. Yet the poem is wholly Drayton's and is one of the most individual in English literature.

William Basse<sup>17</sup> (c. 1583-c. 1653), who lived a long life in the delightful country about Thame in Oxfordshire, claims to be "Colin's loved boy," and asserts that Spenser

his pipe into my bosom flung,  
And said: Though Colin ne'er shall be surpass'd,  
Be while thou liv'st as like him as thou maist.<sup>18</sup>

He is not much like him; but in *Three Pastoral Elegies*, printed in 1602, and nine *Pastorals*, written about 1616 and prepared for publication in 1653, but not printed, he obviously follows the *Shepherds' Calendar*, calling himself "Coliden" in the latter collection and anticipating Gay by making it a shepherd's week. His rustic verse flows pleasantly along, with much compli-

<sup>15</sup> In the later edition (1619), in which an additional eclogue is included.

<sup>16</sup> Lines 444-447. It should be said that the reference to Drayton is not certain, though plausible.

<sup>17</sup> *The Poetical Works of William Basse*, ed. R. W. Bond (1893).

<sup>18</sup> Ed. Bond, pp. 73-74.

mentary allusion to the great persons he knew, one of whom, Poemenarcha, or the shepherds' queen, is the famous Countess of Pembroke, who died in 1621. Basse's most familiar poem is his epitaph on Shakespeare:

Renowned Spenser, lie a thought more nigh  
To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont, lie  
A little nearer Spenser, to make room  
For Shakespeare in your threefold-fourfold tomb. . .

This appeared in the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's poems. Though not printed in the Folio of 1623, it was evidently in manuscript circulation, since Jonson alludes to it in the opening lines of the great poem he contributed to that volume:

My Shakespeare, rise! I will not lodge thee by  
Chaucer or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie  
A little further to make thee a room.

3. *Phineas  
and Giles  
Fletcher*

The two Cambridge poets, Phineas and Giles Fletcher,<sup>19</sup> sons of Dr. Giles Fletcher, the poet-ambassador,<sup>20</sup> and first cousins of the dramatist, lapped up Spenser in their tenderest years and spent the rest of their lives playing with his cadences and his ideas. When Milton went to Cambridge, their works, in print or manuscript, were much in vogue, and they undoubtedly influenced him both in his conception of Spenser and in his own poems. Today the interest of the Fletchers is largely a matter of their close relation with the great poet from whom they borrowed and the otherwise great one to whom they lent. On the whole their discipleship was a disservice to Spenser, for they ran his morality into the ground, and so over-refined his melodies that a reaction toward the ruggedness of Jonson and Donne became imperative.

The two brothers made their first poetical appearance in the Cambridge miscellany, *Sorrow's Joy* (1603), issued to commemorate the emotions of the university on the death of Queen Elizabeth and the accession of James I. Though very young, they are already confirmed Spenserians, Giles' poem being in an eight-line adaptation of the *Faerie Queene* stanza (*ababbccC*), while Phineas tries something like the stanza of Spenser's marriage odes. The older and more productive brother, Phineas<sup>21</sup> (1582-1650), wrote about 1611 a Latin hexameter poem on the recent Gunpowder Plot of 1605, *Locustae, vel Pietas Jesuitica*, a work of much Miltonic interest. When printed in 1627, it was provided with an expanded English paraphrase, *The Locusts, or Apollyonists*, in five cantos and in a variation of the *Faerie Queene* stanza: *abababccC*. In his *Purple Island, or the Isle of Man*<sup>22</sup> (1633) which moved

<sup>19</sup> F. S. Boas, *The Poetical Works of Giles Fletcher and Phineas Fletcher* (2v, Cambridge, 1908-9).

<sup>20</sup> See ch. viii, above and L. Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae*, pp. 38-39, 56-57.

<sup>21</sup> See A. B. Langdale, *Phineas Fletcher, Man of Letters, Science, and Divinity* (1937).

<sup>22</sup> See A. G. Pohlman, "The Purple Island by Phineas Fletcher: A Seventeenth Century Layman's Poetical Conception of the Human Body," *Johns Hopkins Hospital Bull.*, xxviii (1907). 1-12.

Francis Quarles to dub Phineas "the Spenser of this age," he combines the *Shepherds' Calendar* pastoral convention of singing shepherd boys with an enormous extension of the anatomical and psychical allegory of the *Faerie Queene* II. ix. and I. x. ending in one of the most mystifying and protracted of all allegorical dragon-fights. It is as long as a book of the *Faerie Queene*, is similarly divided into twelve cantos, and uses a derivative stanza form: *ababccC*. It is generously sprinkled with poetic beauties, and is so rich in learning, mental ingenuity, and moral soundness that its unreadability must be deeply deplored. In *Britain's Ida, or Venus and Anchises*,<sup>23</sup> a work of earlier youth and greater warmth, and much more brevity, there was so much suggestion of Spenser as to encourage Thomas Walkley to publish it, in 1628, as his work; but a careful reader will hardly forgive Walkley. In his seven *Piscatory Eclogues* (1633) Phineas follows the Italian Sannazaro (1458-1530) in substituting fishermen for the Spenserian shepherds, as he does also in his "piscatory" play, *Sicelides*, acted at King's College, Cambridge, and printed in 1631. The play is in riming verse and prose, the eclogues in various intricate metres, but they seldom lack the closing alexandrine, which in the work of the Fletchers begins to justify its epithet of "needless."

The only important poem of Giles Fletcher, the younger (c. 1585-1623), is *Christ's Victory and Triumph*, printed at Cambridge in 1610. It is in the same eight-line stanza which he used in his contribution to *Sorrow's Joy*, and which his brother employed in *Britain's Ida* and here and there in the *Piscatory Eclogues*: *ababccC*. It is in four books, and must have delighted the young Milton, for here the sacred lyre is struck with lovely resonance. The first book, *Christ's Victory in Heaven*, is the debate between Mercy and Justice over the redemption of man; the second, *Christ's Victory on Earth*, is the Temptation in the wilderness, the theme of *Paradise Regained*. The third book, *Christ's Triumph over Death*, deals with the Crucifixion, and the last, *His Triumph after Death*, with the Resurrection. Into the last are woven the praises of James I as the prince of peace and of Phineas Fletcher's *Purple Island*, which, though not printed till twenty-three years later, was apparently already finished. In Giles Fletcher, even more than in his brother, the sweetness of Spenser is developed into a sedative so potent that, without the prose gloss that the margins provide, it would be very hard to attend to his argument.

The Fletchers gave a religious turn to Spenser's ethical teaching, and they had many followers. Thomas Robinson's *Life and Death of Mary Magdalene*<sup>24</sup> (c. 1620) is in Giles Fletcher's metre, and spices its sanctimonious narrative, not unpleasingly, with conceits and luscious imagery. The Cambridge philosopher, Henry More (1614-1687), employed the years of most violent national strife in setting down in Spenserian stanzas his long and subtle monograph on Christian Neoplatonism, *Psychozoia, or the Life of the*

*Followers  
of the  
Fletchers:  
Robinson*

*Henry More*

<sup>23</sup> See above, Part II, ch. II.

<sup>24</sup> Ed. H. O. Sommer (1899; *EETSES*, 78).

Joseph  
Beaumont

*Soul*,<sup>25</sup> printed in 1642, and in elaborated form in 1647. There is more memorable poetry, but also much more length, in the twenty-four cantos of another work of somewhat similar date, but different doctrinal purpose: *Psyche, or Love's Mystery*, "displaying the intercourse betwixt Christ and the soul," by Joseph Beaumont<sup>26</sup> (1616-1699). Written in the lighter six-line stanza of *Venus and Adonis*, this enormous work, "the longest poem in the language," moves with surprising ease through the three realms of scriptural history, allegory, metaphysics, and contains passages of great imaginative vigor, as does also the large body of Beaumont's religious minor poems,<sup>27</sup> which mark him as no unworthy member of the lyrical school of George Herbert.

4. William  
Browne

William Browne of Tavistock in Devon<sup>28</sup> (c. 1590-c. 1645) is a link between Spenser and Keats, as the Fletchers are between Spenser and Milton. His bright and tuneful eclogues, published in 1614 as *The Shepherd's Pipe*, associate him not only with Spenser and Drayton, but with his immediate friends and fellow-rimers, Wither, Christopher Brooke, and John Davies of Hereford, as well. He wrote also a masque on the theme of Circe and Ulysses (1614) for the Inner Temple, of which he was a member, a couple of dozen good sonnets in Shakespearean form, some admirable songs, a humorous lyric (*Lydford Journey*) which is one of the best of its kind, and much occasional verse. His long elegy on the Countess of Pembroke, "Time hath a long course run since thou wert clay," is a fine example of the conceit-laden poetry that Donne transfigured; and the famous epitaph on the same lady, "Underneath this sable hearse," if by him, as good manuscript authority asserts, shows that he could at times equal Jonson.

He admired Drayton, whose fairy-lore he sometimes imitated, and idolized Spenser, who has been better praised by few poets.<sup>29</sup> Browne was wise enough not to meddle with the Spenserian stanza. His largest and most characteristic, and most Spenserian work is *Britannia's Pastorals* (1613-16, and a third book left incomplete in MS), begun before the age of twenty, for which he uses the fluent and honey-sweet couplets that Keats returned to in *Endymion*.<sup>30</sup> He quite lacks Spenser's ability to tell a story and allows his pretty tales of Marina and the other nymphs and shepherds to grow pale from inanition and to become rather hopelessly entangled; but his Devonshire memories and landscapes are full of nostalgic passion and of color. Browne is distinctly a backward-looking bard. In his view the good days

<sup>25</sup> See G. Bullough, *Philosophical Poems of Henry More* (Manchester, 1931).

<sup>26</sup> A. B. Grosart, *The Complete Poems of Dr. Joseph Beaumont* (2v, 1880). *Psyche* was published in 20 cantos in 1648, but was enlarged and altered in the posthumous edition of 1702.

<sup>27</sup> See E. Robinson, *The Minor Poems of Joseph Beaumont, D.D.* (1914). For Robert Aylett (c. 1583-1655), another Spenserian moralist of great productivity, see the admirable account of F. M. Padelford, *Huntington Library Bull.*, No. 10 (1936). 1-48.

<sup>28</sup> See G. Goodwin, *The Poems of William Browne of Tavistock* (2v, 1893); F. W. Moorman, *William Browne* (Strassburg, 1898).

<sup>29</sup> E.g., *ed. cit.*, I. 222, 225; II. 51.

<sup>30</sup> In the last canto (Book III, second song) he changes to *ottava rima*. For relation of the early editions see G. Tillotson, "Towards a Text of Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*," *Library*, XI (1930). 193-202.

for poets and for common men have passed. Sometimes his charming muse grows acidulous and speaks like his friend Wither's in satire of the present age, but much oftener it takes the quiet road to fairyland and the idealized banks of the Tavy.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Another west-country Spenserian of humbler pretensions was John Dennys, a Gloucestershire gentleman who died in 1609, leaving one long poem in *ottava rima* verse: *The Secrets of Angling, Teaching the Choicest Tools, Baits, and Seasons for the Taking of any Fish in Pond or River*. This was printed in 1613 and had reached its fourth edition in 1652 (reprint, with introduction by Thomas Westwood, 1883), besides being recast in prose in several agricultural manuals. It was naturally known, and was quoted from, by Izaak Walton. Dennys shows skill in linking his humble subject to the aspiring verse form, and he is occasionally lifted by Spenserian reminiscence into a higher air; e.g., in his last stanza, which is an echo of the close of the *Faerie Queene*, Book 1.



# XI

## Christopher Marlowe

Literary history has singularly vindicated itself in the study of Christopher Marlowe<sup>1</sup> (1564-1593). At the beginning of the nineteenth century his works were almost wholly unread and his name was hardly known.<sup>2</sup> The Romantic critics recovered his fame and raised him to a dizzy eminence as the special forerunner of Shakespeare, but as late as 1900 scarcely anything was known of the man, except that he was born, the son of a Canterbury shoemaker, in February, 1564, educated at Cambridge, and slain in 1593 in a tavern brawl. Only during the last generation have the researches of scholars, both laborious and brilliant, thrown such lucky light upon the facts of Marlowe's life that it is now fairly possible to estimate the personality which moulded his extraordinary and exciting poetry, and which his literary contemporaries hailed by such terms as "translunary" and "divine." Souls of poets dead and gone continue to speak to the world by two voices: by their achievements and their character. These are never altogether distinct, yet never wholly merge; and it will be useful to consider in both aspects the impression which Marlowe leaves.

### Marlowe's Achievements

### The Mighty Line

It was Ben Jonson who characterized with immortal felicity the first of the Cambridge scholar's achievements: "Marlowe's mighty line."<sup>3</sup> Unriming decasyllables had been written before him by several sixteenth-century Englishmen: by the Earl of Surrey and Nicholas Grimald, by Sackville and Norton in *Gorboduc*, by Gascoigne in *The Steel Glass*, by Turberville, by Peele in *The Arraignment of Paris*, by the youthful Spenser, and probably by Kyd. Various, and yet similar, purposes seem to have prompted these innovators: the desire to approximate the Virgilian hexameter or the *senarius* of Seneca, the desire for a prose-like (Horatian) vehicle of contemporary satire in Gascoigne, the effort at Ciceronian eloquence in the play of Peele. They were all rather exotic ambitions, and except in Peele's few

<sup>1</sup> *The Works of Christopher Marlowe* (Oxford, 1910; references are to this edition); *The Works and Life of Christopher Marlowe*, general editor R. H. Case (6v, 1930-33); U. M. Ellis-Fermor, *Christopher Marlowe* (1927); John Bakeless, *Christopher Marlowe, the Man in His Time* (1937) and *The Tragical History of Christopher Marlowe* (2v, Cambridge, Mass., 1942); F. S. Boas, *Marlowe and his Circle* (Oxford, 1929) and *Christopher Marlowe* (Oxford, 1940); F. C. Owlett, "The Eulogy of Marlowe," *Poetry Rev.*, xxvi (1935), 5-18, 127-138; Marion B. Smith, *Marlowe's Imagery and the Marlowe Canon* (Philadelphia, 1940); P. H. Kocher, *Christopher Marlowe: A Study of His Thought, Learning, and Character* (1946); S. A. Tannenbaum, *Christopher Marlowe: A Concise Bibliography* (1937).

<sup>2</sup> See T. Brooke, "The Reputation of Christopher Marlowe," *Trans. Conn. Acad. of Arts and Sciences*, xxv (1922), 347-408.

<sup>3</sup> See T. S. Eliot, "Notes on the Blank Verse of Christopher Marlowe," in *The Sacred Wood* (1928), pp. 86-94; T. Brooke, "Marlowe's Versification and Style," *SP*, xix (1922), 186-205.



lines they produced exotic effects. It was Marlowe who changed the sow's ear into the silken purse. When he employed it, blank verse became at once what Shakespeare, Milton, and so many others have shown that it can hardly cease to be, the most expressive and the grandest of English metres.

Few poets have equaled the ability that Marlowe possessed of condensing an entire lyric into a single verse. In *Tamburlaine* and *Faustus* particularly, there are lines that glitter and writhe like burnished serpents; e.g.,

For Tamburlaine, the scourge of God, must die (2 *Tamb.*, 4641),  
I'll burn my books! Ah, Mephistophilis! (*Faustus*, 1477),  
But stay a while! let me be king till night! (*Edw. II.*, 2045),  
O girl! O gold! O beauty! O my bliss! (*Jew of Malta*, 695).

In ten syllables Marlowe can reveal the wild beauty of a yearning soul:

Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships? (*Faustus*, 1328),  
And ride in triumph through Persepolis (1 *Tamb.*, 754),  
Still climbing after knowledge infinite (1 *Tamb.*, 875).

He can lay bare a mind in the moment of irrevocable decision:

A God is not so glorious as a king (1 *Tamb.*, 762),  
And all is dross that is not Helena (*Faustus*, 1334);

or sum up with a divine finality one of the great truths of human experience:

And where Hell is, there must we ever be (*Faustus*, 555),  
Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight (*Faustus*, 1478).

Marlowe's second achievement was in teaching the drama what Spenser was teaching verse fiction, the meaning of romance. As the first great romantic dramatist Marlowe taught the difference between living and life. Previous writers had dealt with the externals of living: restless living, as in the lover's pains of Wyatt and Surrey; fashionable living, as in Lyly; foolish living, as in Gascoigne's satires; evil living, as in Greene. The caustic radiance of Marlowe's mind burned through these externalities and revealed the protoplasmic life within. Smug questions grow impossible. Does Tamburlaine live well or ill? Does Faustus live wisely or unwisely? Does Barabas act justly or unjustly? As well ask whether a mountain ought to tower in sterile grandeur above the pleasant useful meadows, or whether the ocean has a right to roar. Life's the thing, not how, or where, or why one lives. In some of the most dynamic lines that ever accompanied the apparition of new-born Athene Marlowe spoke the message of romance:

*Marlowe's  
Roman-  
ticism*

From jiggling veins of riming mother-wits,  
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,  
We'll lead you to the stately tent of war.

The time of homily and dalliance is past; the age of vision is at hand. From this moment the great crusade is on. Excelsior is the motto of every man. The

votaries of life burst their manacles, and, in the words of the last of Marlowe's Stuart followers,

O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense or rare,  
With head, hands, wings, or feet <sup>4</sup>

pursue their way. The avenues through which the chase proceeds are as numerous as the lives of men: regal ambition, knowledge, the sacred hunger for gold, the thirst for friendship, or the consuming fire of love. These are the topics of Marlowe's chief plays; but always there is life ahead, life which

Wills us to wear ourselves and never rest (1 *Tamb.*, 877),  
and makes of us all crusading knights,

That in conceit bear empires on our spears,  
Affecting thoughts coequal with the clouds (1 *Tamb.*, 260 f.).

It was Milton again who put into the mouth of his most romantic and Marlowesque figure the proper comment upon the careers of Tamburlaine and Faustus, Guise, Barabas, and Mortimer:

That strife  
Was not inglorious, though the event was dire. <sup>5</sup>

Writing before the romantic achievement of either Spenser or Marlowe was performed, Sir Philip Sidney spoke golden words of one of the finest poems of martial romance then audible to English ears:

Certainly, I must confess mine own barbarousness. I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet: and yet it is sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style.

When the blind crowder (fiddler) was supplanted by Marlowe, "the Muses' darling," as Peele called him, and the rude style became the mighty line, the ideal poet described by Sidney stood confessed:

He cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion . . . and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corner. <sup>6</sup>

For three and a half centuries Marlowe's works have done no less.

Marlowe's third great achievement was the discovery of the secret of dramatic action. It seems usual to think of this poet as a great lyricist who by pure chance blundered upon the drama in his search for a means of self-expression. Blunders of this kind hardly happen to men of genius, and certainly nothing of the sort happened to Marlowe. Few men can ever have possessed a surer native sense of dramatic values. It seems clear, as far as contemporary tributes and allusions permit us to judge, that even the first

Marlowe's  
Dramatic  
Sense

<sup>4</sup> *Paradise Lost*, II, 948 f.

<sup>5</sup> *Paradise Lost*, I, 623 f.

<sup>6</sup> *Defense of Poesy*, ed. Feuillerat, p. 24, 20.

play, *Tamburlaine*, owed its sweeping success not so much to the splendid poetry of its lines or the romantic wonder of its story as to the brilliance of its dramatic effects. The instinct for dramatic situation is everywhere apparent, and it was this instinct to which the greatest succeeding dramatists did homage. It is not merely in the portrayal of the chief figure that Marlowe's dramatic eye appears. The essential playwright is revealed in the very first speech, in those five lines of Mycetes which at once tear the veil from before the gorgeous impotence of the Persian throne:

Brother Cosroe, I find myself aggrieved,  
Yet insufficient to express the same....

The first part of *Tamburlaine* exhibits a certainty of purpose and method hardly less extraordinary in a young author's work than that expressed in the astounding prologue. The first act pictures the blossoming of the hero's innate ambition under the stimulation of Zenocrate's beauty and the threat of the thousand horsemen of Theridamas. This act ends with the establishment of the moral ascendancy of the shepherd over, first, his intended captor, and, second, his destined bride. The second act shows this transmuted into actual accomplishment, as the shepherd's imagination is fired by the picture of the royal conqueror riding in triumph through Persepolis; and the act concludes with a magnificent finale, as the hero takes the Persian crown and sets it, Napoleon-like, upon his own head. The opening of the third act introduces the vainglorious and mighty Bajazet, most redoubtable of the Scythian's foes, threatening vast ruin to the upstart; and this act rises rapidly to the crisis of the play, the battle of Ankara. When the act ends, the new king of Persia is the supreme ruler of all Asia. The fourth act is a structural masterpiece. The conqueror has apparently reached the height of his career. Is not his boasted fortune now preparing to forsake him? The first scene shows a storm gathering in far off Egypt. The Soldan summons his hordes:

Awake, ye men of Memphis! hear the clang  
Of Scythian trumpets; hear the basilisks  
That, roaring, shake Damascus' turrets down!

The third scene shows Egypt and Arabia on the march, apparently irresistible, and confident of victory. And while the storm-clouds gather, *Tamburlaine*, careless of the future, vaunts himself in the height of tragic *hybris*. He joys in the humiliations of the captive Bajazet and Zabina, blind to their sufferings, reckless of their curses and prayers for vengeance. The whole act is, as a fourth act should be, a breathless lull of suspense; and in the last lines the hero makes a yet more wanton demand of fortune:

We mean to travel to th' antarctic pole,  
Conquering the people underneath our feet,  
And be renown'd as never emperors were.

Whom the gods wish to ruin, one remembers, they first make mad. In the fifth act the clouds darken, suspense thickens. "Still doth this man, or rather

god, of war" batter at the walls of Damascus, regardless of the brewing storm. The virgins move him not. By their slaughter he vindicates his tragic consistency and throws another gauntlet into the teeth of Nemesis. Then, lest tragic pity be lost to sight in all this accumulation of tragic fear, the stage is cleared, and the man of war exposes in one of the grandest soliloquies the heart of the lover, the soul of the idealist:

Ah, fair Zenocrate! divine Zenocrate! . . .  
What is beauty, saith my sufferings, then?  
If all the pens that ever poets held. . .

There follow the deaths of Bajazet and Zabina, another weight in the scale of Nemesis. Does not the fate of Tamburlaine now totter in the balance? So Zenocrate thinks, as she wrestles in prayer for the life of her lover:

Ah, Tamburlaine, my love, sweet Tamburlaine,  
That fight'st for sceptres and for slippery crowns,  
Behold the Turk and his great empress!  
Thou that in conduct of thy happy stars  
Sleep'st every night with conquest on thy brows,  
And yet would'st shun the wavering turns of war . . .  
Behold the Turk and his great empress!  
Ah, mighty Jove and holy Mahomet,  
Pardon my love!

At this point the blow, hanging in the air during two acts, falls at last. Enter Philemus to announce:

Madam, your father and the Arabian king . . . come now,  
Ready for battle 'gainst my lord the king.

If all this is not dramatic, what is drama? But drama having had its say, romance may claim a hearing. They sound to the battle, and Tamburlaine enjoys the victory, and so, after two pages of reconciliation, the tragedy closes on the Greek note: pity and terror, followed by serenity and clothed in beauty infinite. So much for the least mature of Marlowe's greater plays. From later practice he learned much concerning the mechanics of stage presentation, but he was indeed a dramatist born.

Such, then, were the three great achievements of Marlowe's six years. He let drop upon an astonished world what Alfred Noyes has called Marlowe's "eagle's feather of blank verse";<sup>7</sup> he, along with Spenser and with Sidney, planted in modern England the magic flower of romance and enriched for centuries the soil in which it grows; finally, he taught the English tragic stage more than it learned from any other man except Shakespeare, who was the greatest of Marlowe's debtors and continuators.

Marlowe's  
Character

Of the man himself, the storehouse of this energy, we have learned a great deal, as everybody knows, in the last twenty years,<sup>8</sup> and each accretion

<sup>7</sup> *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* (1913), p. 28 ("A Coiner of Angels").

<sup>8</sup> See especially J. L. Hotson, *The Death of Christopher Marlowe* (1925) and M. Eccles, *Christopher Marlowe in London* (1934).

of knowledge has on the whole tended to raise his status, if only by disproving slanders with which modern fiction and ancient polemics had darkened him. Laying the gratuitous imaginings aside, we may consider the qualities of his personality which are most clearly mirrored in his writings. First, then, he was, like Spenser, a scholar, one of the truest of his time. He loved learning deeply and hated ignorance. Few English poets—perhaps none but Spenser, Milton, and Browning—have so well vindicated the literary uses of academic knowledge. Marlowe is never more the poet than when he is most the scholar: in the address to Helen in *Faustus* or in Tamburlaine's comparison of Zenocrate to the heroines of classical literature;<sup>9</sup> in Æneas's story of the wooden horse,<sup>10</sup> or in the numberless passages that give perpetual value to the sixteenth-century accomplishment in geography,<sup>11</sup> astronomy, and philosophy. His scholarship gave him his remarkable sense of form, form in the single line, in the scene, and in the play as a whole; and the sense of form was precisely the rarest and most needed of virtues in Elizabethan poetry. His scholarship gave him the scholar's passion for truth, for fair play in intellectual disputes. In an age of bigotry his was one of the few voices raised in defence of alien races and alien creeds. Better a true Turk, he says, or a consistent Jew, than a faithless and time-serving Christian. One needs but little acquaintance with religious controversy to understand why the Prelatists and Puritans alike flinched before this reasoning and drowned the logic of the poet with cries of "libertine" and "atheist." Marlowe may, in certain senses, have been both,<sup>12</sup> but the clamor must have appeared silly, even to contemporaries, in view of the tremendous close of *Tamburlaine* and the whole mighty lesson of *Faustus*, in view of the deep earnestness of every word Marlowe wrote.

#### His Scholarship

So much for Marlowe's intellectual character. His personal character reveals itself no less vividly. In the first place, he held himself high, and though plying a vulgar trade, refused to be vulgarized. Not even from his Puritan defamers do we hear concerning him stories of such low associations as cling to the memory of Greene and Peele. To his familiars he was Kit Marlowe. Such were his fellow-scholar Nashe, the poet Watson, the grave and learned Chapman, and Sir Walter Raleigh himself;<sup>13</sup> but the company of his friends seems to have been as small as it was select. The printer of *Tamburlaine*, dedicating the two plays to the Gentlemen-Readers in 1590, allows himself none of the usual liberties. He is but a tradesman presenting one gentleman to others:

#### His Personal Character

<sup>9</sup> 2 *Tamburlaine*, 3054 ff.

<sup>10</sup> *Dido*, 477 ff.

<sup>11</sup> See Ethel Seaton, "Marlowe's Map," *E&S*, x (1924), 13-35.

<sup>12</sup> See H. W. Herrington, "Christopher Marlowe, Rationalist," *Essays in Memory of Barrett Wendell* (Cambridge, Mass., 1926), pp. 119-152; M. Eccles, "Marlowe in Kentish Tradition," *N&Q*, CLXIX (1935), 20-23, 39-41, 58-61; P. H. Kocher, "The Development of Marlowe's Character," *PQ*, XVII (1938), 331-350, and "Marlowe's Atheist Lecture," *JEGP*, XXXIX (1940), 98-106.

<sup>13</sup> Kyd, in his letter to Puckering, mentions as special friends of Marlowe "Harriot, Warner, Roydon, and some stationers [book-publishers] in Paul's Churchyard." These also were no mean company.



Great folly were it in me to commend unto your wisdoms either the eloquence of the author or the worthiness of the matter itself.

Thomas Heywood, introducing the 1633 edition of the *Jew of Malta*, refers ceremoniously to this work "by so worthy an author as Master Marlowe," and the most gentlemanly of the publishers of the time, Edward Blount, writes a dedication of *Hero and Leander* to Sir Thomas Walsingham which, considering the dignity of the person addressed, indicates that Marlowe's friends did not feel that he had left a wounded name:

Sir, we think not ourselves discharged of the duty we owe to our friend, when we have brought the breathless body to the earth; for albeit the eye there taketh his ever-farewell of that beloved object, yet the impression of the man that hath been dear unto us, living an after-life in our memory, there putteth us in mind of farther obsequies due unto the deceased . . . I suppose myself executor to the unhappily deceased author of this poem, upon whom knowing that in his lifetime you bestowed many kind favors, entertaining the parts of reckoning and worth which you found in him with good countenance and liberal affection: I cannot but see so far into the will of him dead that whatsoever issue of his brain should chance to come abroad, that the first breath it should take might be the gentle air of your liking: for since his self had been accustomed thereunto, it would prove more agreeable and thriving to his right children than any other foster countenance whatsoever. . . . Of a double duty, the one to yourself, the other to the deceased, I present the same to your most favorable allowance. . . .

Hero and  
Leander

This was written five years after Marlowe's death, and scandalous tongues were wagging. In the circumstances it is not the language a reputable publisher would use in coupling a great living name with the name of a dead atheist and profligate. "Slain by a bawdy serving man, a rival of his in his lewd love," Meres wrote of Marlowe in this same year 1598,<sup>14</sup> basing his statement upon that of a Puritan pamphleteer, Thomas Beard, who based his on hearsay. Factually, the charge has been disproved by Mr. Hotson's discovery of the death record; more fundamentally, it is disproved by *Hero and Leander*. The subject of this fragment, the last thing Marlowe did, is one of the most beautifully sensuous stories in all the pagan literature of Greece, and the treatment Marlowe gives it is one of the purest things in Elizabethan poetry. In what he wrote there is not an obscene word or a degenerate suggestion; everywhere he sees the marriage of true minds, the cleanliness of ocean-dewy limbs and childlike souls. Even in the verse there seems to be a kind of reticence. The narrative is masculine and straightforward beyond any other of its genre and age,<sup>15</sup> but in Marlowe's couplets there is no fluent and suggestive ease; there is, on the contrary, a sweet hesitancy, not otherwise characteristic of the poet, which cools instead of

<sup>14</sup> See D. C. Allen, "Meres and the Death of Marlowe," *LTLS*, Feb. 5, 1932, p. 70.

<sup>15</sup> See D. Bush, "The Influence of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* on Early Mythological Poems," *MLN*, XLII (1927): 211-217.

inflaming the mind. And everywhere there is moral poise; everywhere there are grave and tender observations, as of a soul firm fastened in its roots:

For faithful love will never turn to hate.

It lies not in our power to love or hate,  
For will in us is overrul'd by fate.  
Where both deliberate, the love is slight;  
Who ever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight?

My words shall be as spotless as my youth,  
Full of simplicity and naked truth.

Sweet are the kisses, the embracements sweet,  
When like desires and affections meet;  
For from the earth to heaven is Cupid rais'd  
When fancy is in equal balance peis'd [i.e., weighed].

Love is too full of faith, too credulous,  
With folly and false hope deluding us.

Love is not full of pity, as men say,  
But deaf and cruel where he means to prey.<sup>16</sup>

It is unfashionable but just to assert the abstention from impure suggestion in all Marlowe's original work. How else explain the stress upon the chastity of his remorseless Scythian conqueror, and the refusal in the case of the great sensualist, Faustus, and the degenerate Edward II, to dwell upon any sensual detail; or the splendid candor which makes the lines to Helen a veritable hymn, and the flowerlike grace of the Passionate Shepherd's proposal, "Come live with me and be my love," which might have been so robust? How else explain the tender treatment of Abigail and the tenderer care to extenuate the sin of Isabella?

Marlowe's first play seems to be *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, though nothing is known of it till the year after his death, when it was published as by Marlowe and Nashe. It is a reverent but rather bold version, in five acts and in blank verse, of the first, second, and fourth books of Virgil's *Aeneid*. The company to which it is assigned on the title-page, the Children of the Chapel, is not one with which Marlowe is known to have had any contact otherwise, and the probability is that the play was written at Cambridge before his London career began. It is mainly notable for the poignant treatment of Dido's love and for the anticipation in many lines of more famous passages in later plays.

*Marlowe's  
Develop-  
ment as a  
Dramatist*

The first part of *Tamburlaine* was probably also drafted, if not written, before Marlowe left Cambridge in 1587. References to it forbid placing it much later, and it shows no special familiarity with the London stage. As in *Dido*, the classical influence is strong. Though based upon the career of the famous Timur, who was a contemporary of Chaucer, the Persia Marlowe

*Tambur-  
laine*

<sup>16</sup> *Hero and Leander*, 1st Sestiad, 128, 167 f., 207 f.; 2nd Sestiad 29-32, 221 f., 287 f. See D. Bush, "Notes on Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*," *PMLA*, XLIV (1929), 760-764.



imagines is the Persia of Herodotus and Xenophon; and the Platonic element in the play's philosophy is conspicuous.<sup>17</sup> The other chief external influences are the legends of the heroic outlaw, e.g., Robin Hood, and the work of Spenser. Though the *Faerie Queene* had not been published, it is evident that Marlowe was very familiar with at least the seventh and eighth cantos of Book I. Passages from them are embroidered upon both parts of *Tamburlaine*, and hang there as a gracious link between two poets who had not very much in common and, quite possibly, never met.<sup>18</sup>

It may have been only accident that caused *Tamburlaine* to fall into the hands of Edward Alleyn, the all-dominating chief actor of the Admiral's company; but the affinity between the rôle and the player was so perfect that a second part was at once required and Marlowe was committed to one-man plays.<sup>19</sup> His own mind, certainly, ran in that direction, for the insolence of youth was fervent in him. "No one," it has been said, "has ever expressed so well a young man's emotion at the new consciousness of what a world there is, all before him."<sup>20</sup> *Tamburlaine* is a hymn to intellectual beauty, a paean on the superiority of mind over matter. Marlowe was a Carlylean before Carlyle, and summed up the doctrine of the "hero" or superman in his Scythian shepherd's words, "I, thus conceiving, . . .

Shall give the world to note, for all my birth,  
That virtue solely is the sum of glory,  
And fashions men with true nobility,<sup>21</sup>

*virtue* being that virile soul-stuff that enables the great man to focus all his energies upon a single goal, a "perfect bliss and sole felicity." For *Tamburlaine* the goal happens to be "the sweet fruition of an earthly crown."<sup>22</sup> For Faustus it is the superhuman knowledge which is the ultimate in power. "Tis Magic, magic, that hath ravish'd me," Faustus says; and for Barabas it is the power, beauty, and romance of wealth. But all these characters are off the same block, and their great speeches are sometimes almost interchangeable; as where Faustus visualizes his desire in terms of "huge argosies," gold, and orient pearl,<sup>23</sup> or Barabas speaks of himself as a warrior,

That in a field amidst his enemies  
Doth see his soldiers slain, himself disarm'd.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See W. Thorp, "The Ethical Problem in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*," *JEGP*, xxix (1930), 385-89; R. W. Battenhouse, *Marlowe's Tamburlaine, a Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy* (Nashville, 1941).

<sup>18</sup> See G. Schoeneich, *Der literarische Einfluss Spensers auf Marlowe* (Halle, 1907); C. Crawford, *Collectanea* 1 (1906), 47-100; and for a divergent opinion T. W. Baldwin, "The Genesis of Some Passages Which Spenser Borrowed from Marlowe," *ELH*, ix (1942), 157-87.

<sup>19</sup> See Helen L. Gardner, "The Second Part of *Tamburlaine the Great*," *MLR*, xxxvii (1942), 18-24.

<sup>20</sup> E. T. McLaughlin, edition of *Edward II* (1894), p. 169.

<sup>21</sup> *Tamburlaine*, 1964 ff.

<sup>22</sup> *Tamburlaine*, 879 f.

<sup>23</sup> *Doctor Faustus*, 110 ff., 159 ff.

<sup>24</sup> *Jew of Malta*, 436 f.

*Doctor Faustus* and *The Rich Jew of Malta* are both preserved in imperfect texts, and so, in perhaps even more deplorable degree, is the *Massacre at Paris*,<sup>25</sup> which centers attention upon the villain-hero Guise and is likely to seem to the reader mainly a matter of a few fine soliloquies, though (as is always the way in Marlowe) the driving purpose comes out better in the acting.

*The Massacre at Paris*

Marlowe was the first man to elicit the poetry in the Faust legend,<sup>26</sup> translating the quest of swinish pleasures which the Faustbook (1587) pictured into a quest of intellectual power. In the earlier, briefer, and better of the two bad versions which have survived, the outlines of an original five-act tragedy can be traced, but as the text stands it divides into three parts: a grand opening, dealing with the signing of the bond, and a magnificent conclusion, which are bound together by a series of discontinuous and sometimes prosaic interludes.<sup>27</sup> It would seem that the poet is here attempting an interesting dramatic experiment, attempting, that is, to give stage plausibility to the passage of a great deal of time (twenty-four years) between the opening and close of the play. On the stage, indeed, the effect is felt, even in our truncated text, but the reader is likely to pass from the poetry of the opening to that of the close too impatiently to observe it.

*Doctor Faustus*

Criticism of the *Jew of Malta*, extant only in a single very late quarto (1633), is like the restoration of a badly repainted masterpiece, and requires both delicacy and diffidence. It was apparently the most steadily popular of all Marlowe's plays, but has been outrageously overlaid with alien grotesquery, particularly in the third and fourth acts. The genuine parts are remarkable for their effective stage business and melodious blank verse. The first two acts, said Hallam, "are more vigorously conceived, both as to character and circumstance, than any other Elizabethan play, except those of Shakespeare;"<sup>28</sup> and Swinburne judged that "in the blank verse of Milton alone . . . has the glory or the melody of passages in the opening soliloquy of Barabas been possibly surpassed."<sup>29</sup> It was another dramatic experiment, aiming to present history-in-the-making as suggested by rumors concerning a contemporary Jew, in Constantinople, David Passi, and a Turkish attack on Malta, which, though excitedly discussed in the early part of 1591, did not actually take place.<sup>30</sup>

*The Jew of Malta*

<sup>25</sup> Ed. Malone Soc. (1928). See J. Q. Adams, "The Massacre at Paris Leaf," *Library*, xiv (1934), 447-469.

<sup>26</sup> See P. M. Palmer and R. P. More, *Sources of the Faust Tradition from Simon Magus to Lessing* (1936); B. D. Brown, "Marlowe, Faustus, and Simon Magus," *PMLA*, lrv (1939), 82-121; P. H. Kocher, "The English Faust Book and the Date of Marlowe's *Faustus*," *MLN*, lv (1940), 95-101, and "The Early Date for Marlowe's *Faustus*," *MLN*, lviii (1943), 539-542; Leo Kirschbaum, "Marlowe's *Faustus*: A Reconsideration," *RES*, xix (1943), 225-241.

<sup>27</sup> See an important article by P. H. Kocher, "Nashe's Authorship of the Prose Scenes in *Faustus*," *MLQ*, iii (1942), 17-40.

<sup>28</sup> Henry Hallam, *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, ed. 1864, II, 270.

<sup>29</sup> Article on Marlowe in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

<sup>30</sup> See T. Brooke, "The Prototype of Marlowe's Jew of Malta," *LTLS*, June 8, 1922, p. 380; E. Seaton, "Fresh Sources for Marlowe," *RES*, v (1929), 385-401.

Edward the  
Second

Marlowe's last play, *Edward II*,<sup>31</sup> is very unlike the rest. It is not at all a one-man drama, and though it contains great poetry, it is not poetic drama in the sense in which Marlowe's other plays are. The change is to be attributed both to growing experience and to the fact that Marlowe was now dissociated from Alleyn, probably by reason of the merging of the Lord Admiral's and Lord Strange's men in 1591. *Edward II* was produced by a less distinguished company, the Earl of Pembroke's, which also acted the early versions of the second and third parts of *Henry VI*. In *Edward II* there is little declamation and much brilliant stage action. The dialogue is nearly three times as rapid as in *Tamburlaine*; the whole emphasis is upon the business of the theatre, and it is quite certain that in writing this play Marlowe did not have the reader in mind. Readers have resented this and deplored the lack of interest. It is not recorded that spectators ever have, and it seems sounder to stand with Lamb<sup>32</sup> in admiring the extraordinary dramaturgy of (for example) the death scene than with those who find poetry lacking in the many sinewy and frugal speeches.

<sup>31</sup> Ed. W. D. Briggs (1914); Malone Soc. (1925). See J. M. Berdan, "Marlowe's *Edward II*," *PQ*, III (1924), 197-207; L. J. Mills, "The Meaning of *Edward II*," *MP*, XXXII (1934), 11-31.

<sup>32</sup> Charles Lamb, *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets* (1808).

## XII

### Shakespeare to 1603

William Shakespeare<sup>1</sup> (1564-1616) was born, in the sixth year of Queen Elizabeth's reign, at Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, in the rural centre of England, rich in legend and in associations with leading events and characters of the Wars of the Roses. He was baptized in Stratford Trinity Church, April 26, 1564, and buried there fifty-two years later. The precise date of his birth is unrecorded, but tradition fixes it on St. George's Day (April 23), which was also the date on which he died in 1616. In the poet's time Stratford was a thriving market town, situated on a well-traveled thoroughfare of Roman origin between the Cotswold Hills, which were famous in the annals of country sport, and the still timbered "forest of Arden" to the north. There was a considerable Welsh element in the population, drawn from the Severn country farther west. Otherwise the local types that were most familiar were the agricultural "clowns" or farmhands, the constables, schoolmasters, parsons, and "mechanical" tradesmen, and the country gentry, who lived on

*The  
Stratford  
Setting*

<sup>1</sup> This note is necessarily limited to some of the most important modern biographical and critical works on Shakespeare and to some standard works of reference. See W. Ebisch and L. L. Schücking, *A Shakespeare Bibliography* (Oxford, 1931) and *Supplement* (Oxford, 1937). — E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare* (2v, Oxford, 1930), indispensable; abridgment by C. Williams (Oxford, 1933). J. Q. Adams, *A Life of William Shakespeare* (1923); T. Brooke, *Shakespeare of Stratford* (New Haven, 1926); P. Alexander, *Shakespeare's Life and Art* (1939); E. I. Fripp, *Shakespeare, Man and Artist* (2v, Oxford, 1938); Hazelton Spencer, *The Art and Life of William Shakespeare* (1940); W. Raleigh, *Shakespeare* (EML Series, 1907); H. C. Bartlett, *Mr. William Shakespeare* (New Haven, 1922); G. B. Harrison, *Shakespeare under Elizabeth* (1933); E. K. Chambers, *Shakespeare, a Survey* (1926). Many aspects of Shakespearean scholarship are considered in H. Granville-Barker, G. B. Harrison, and others, *A Companion to Shakespeare Studies* (1934). B. R. Lewis, *The Shakespeare Documents* (2v, Stanford University, 1941) assembles a vast amount of more or less pertinent material. General surveys primarily critical rather than biographical include J. M. Murry, *Shakespeare* (1936); Mark Van Doren, *Shakespeare* (1939); J. D. Wilson, *The Essential Shakespeare* (1932); H. Granville-Barker, *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (three series, 1927-1936); G. W. Knight, *The Wheel of Fire* (Oxford, 1930) and later volumes; M. R. Ridley, *Shakespeare's Plays, a Commentary* (1937). Theodore Spencer, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* (1942) interprets the plays in terms of the Renaissance concept of the "world order." Special topics are considered in E. E. Stoll, *Shakespeare Studies* (1927), *Art and Artifice in Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 1933), and other volumes; C. F. E. Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (1935); A. C. Sprague, *Shakespeare and the Audience* (1935), on the technique of exposition, and *Shakespeare and the Actors* (1944), on stage business; O. J. Campbell, *Shakespeare's Satire* (1943); T. W. Baldwin, *The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company* (Princeton, 1927). — H. C. Bartlett and A. W. Pollard, *A Census of Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto, 1594-1709* (New Haven, 1916; rev. ed., 1939); J. J. Munro, *The Shakespeare Allusion-Book* (2v, 1909), revised ed. (2v, 1932), supplemented by other collections of early allusions; W. Franz, *Die Sprache Shakespeares in Vers und Prosa* (Halle, 1939); G. S. Gordon, *Shakespeare's English* (Oxford, 1928; S. P. E. Tract, no. 29); C. T. Onions, *A Shakespeare Glossary* (Oxford, 1911); J. Bartlett, *Concordance* (1906); annual bibliographies appear in *SAB*. Other important specialized studies are cited in later notes.

Parentage  
and Educa-  
tion

their estates but did their business in Stratford. These are among the types that Shakespeare portrays with the greatest clearness and affection.<sup>2</sup>

The poet's parents, John Shakespeare and Mary Arden, were both from the adjacent country and, particularly his mother, had valid claims to gentility. His father prospered at the local industry of glove-making and also attained the highest municipal offices in the town, but by the time Shakespeare was growing up he had met reverses in consequence of law-suits and a too sanguine temperament. The young William, eldest son of the family, attended the Stratford Grammar School,<sup>3</sup> which had an excellent reputation and rather distinguished teachers. There is even a possibility, but no definite proof, that he may have had a term or two at Oxford.<sup>4</sup> However, his hasty marriage at the age of eighteen to Anne Hathaway of Shottery village, on the outskirts of Stratford, and the birth of his three children within the next three years certainly put an end to his regular schooling. There is no evidence how or where he lived during the next half-dozen years. The seventeenth-century tradition, reported by Aubrey from Beeston, that he had been "in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country" is one of the oldest and most plausible, for there is much about schools in Shakespeare and it usually suggests the teacher's rather than the pupil's point of view.

Life in  
London

Before long, evidently, Shakespeare followed the procession of talent to London and gave himself to the rapidly expanding vocation of the stage. By 1592, when Greene singled him out for spiteful notice,<sup>5</sup> he had obviously attained some prominence as an actor and playwright, while Chettle's apology of the same year shows that he had become the esteemed protégé of "divers of worship," i.e., persons of high social standing, and was favorably known for the qualities of geniality and good breeding which Elizabethans described by the word *gentle*, and which are the traits most noted in the contemporary mentions of him. Before 1594, by means now wholly unknown, he had established a friendship with the young Earl of Southampton, to whom he dedicated his two long poems, and to whom he addressed, probably between 1593 and 1597, the bulk of his sonnets. His purely literary ambition appears to have been soon crowded out by increasing theatrical business. He was one of the principal actors in the Lord Chamberlain's Company till 1603, though probably a dignified rather than highly gifted performer, and he was one of the seven partners in the building of the Globe Theatre in 1599. When James I took the Chamberlain's Men under his personal patronage in 1603, Shakespeare shared largely in the mounting prestige and prosperity of the company and had a modest place at court. His ties with

<sup>2</sup> For the Stratford background see E. I. Fripp, *Shakespeare's Stratford* (Oxford, 1928); Oliver Baker, *In Shakespeare's Warwickshire and the Unknown Years* (1937); and D. H. Madden, *The Diary of Master William Silence* (1897).

<sup>3</sup> For the educational methods at the earliest levels see T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Petty School* (Urbana, 1943) and *William Shakespeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke* (2v, Urbana, 1944); also David Brown, "What Shakespeare Learned at School," *Bucknell Univ. Stud.*, 1 (1941), 1-20.

<sup>4</sup> This idea is developed by J. S. Smart, *Shakespeare Truth and Tradition* (1928), pp. 175-182.

<sup>5</sup> See above, Part II, ch. IV.



Stratford, however, remained close. The only private letter to him that has survived shows him acting in 1598 as the London friend of the Stratford corporation. He invested his wealth largely in Stratford property and in 1597 bought "New Place," one of the great houses of the town, which about 1610 became his chief residence and the home of his family.

*Retirement*

*The Quarto Editions*

Shakespeare's first published play was *Titus Andronicus*, printed anonymously in 1594<sup>6</sup> and followed within about a month by a bad text of *Henry VI, Part II*, likewise anonymous and of still disputed authorship. Sixteen other plays were published in his lifetime in separate "quarto" form.<sup>7</sup> From 1598 on, his name is usually played up on title-pages and in stationers' entries in such a way as to show that it had a high sales value; but there is not much indication that Shakespeare himself authorized or approved any of these publications, except perhaps the second editions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*, issued to curtail the circulation of earlier corrupt texts. The "bad quartos" include also the first editions of *Henry V*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Pericles*, and the third part of *Henry VI*. Theories of their origin vary. Stenographic reporting, "memorial reconstruction" (i.e., efforts by actors to put a play together from memory), and the use of "foul papers" (i.e., unrevised first drafts) have all been suggested. These bad quartos should be distinguished from the "good quartos," which, whether published with the author's consent or not, rest on authentic texts, sometimes fuller than those of the Folio, but the line of demarcation is not precise.<sup>8</sup>

In 1619, three years after Shakespeare's death, ten plays by, or ascribed to, him were published by Thomas Pavier without authority, some with protective pre-datings. Soon afterwards Shakespeare's actor-colleagues, John Heminge and Henry Condell, undertook the editing of his complete dramatic works with the backing of Ben Jonson, who had published his own *Works*

<sup>6</sup> Facsimile, ed. J. Q. Adams (Folger Shakespeare Library, 1937).

<sup>7</sup> The original quarto editions were facsimiled under the direction of F. J. Furnivall (43v, 1880-9), but this reproduction is not always reliable. A new series has been begun by the Shakespeare Assoc. and Sidgwick & Jackson of London, of which five volumes have appeared to date. The 1603 and the 1604 *Hamlet* have been reproduced by the Huntington Library (1931, 1938), and the Sonnets in several facsimiles (1905, 1925, 1926). The first folio has been facsimiled by the Clarendon Press, Oxford (ed. S. Lee, 1902) and by Methuen & Co. (1910); the other three folios also by Methuen & Co. (1904-9). The editions most valuable for their annotations and other apparatus are the so-called (third) Variorum, ed. J. Boswell (21v, 1821); the Cambridge, ed. W. G. Clark, J. Glover, and W. A. Wright (9v, 1863-6; revised ed., 1891-3); the *New Variorum*, ed. H. H. Furness, his son, and others, in which 21 plays, the poems, and sonnets have now appeared (Philadelphia, 1871- ); and the *Arden*, general editors W. J. Craig and R. H. Case (39v, 1899-1924). Convenient editions in small volumes, with less elaborate annotation, include the *Tudor Shakespeare*, ed. W. A. Neilson and A. H. Thorndike (40v, 1911-13, new issue 1922, 1941); *Yale Shakespeare*, ed. T. Brooke, W. L. Cross, W. H. Durham (40v, 1918-28); *New Temple Shakespeare*, ed. M. R. Ridley (39v, 1934-6). The following editions of selected plays, primarily school texts, are also useful: the Clarendon Press series, ed. W. A. Wright (10v, Oxford, 1868-83), and the series ed. G. L. Kittredge (16v, Boston, 1939-46). The best texts currently available in one volume containing all the plays and poems are those ed. W. A. Neilson (Boston, 1906; rev. ed., 1942) and G. L. Kittredge (Boston, 1936).

<sup>8</sup> See A. W. Pollard, *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* (1909) and *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates* (Cambridge, 1917; 2ed., 1920); L. Kirschbaum, "A Census of Bad Quartos," *RES*, xiv (1938). 1-24.



*The First Folio*

in 1616. Difficulties involving publishers' rights, mislaid manuscripts, and rival demands upon William Jaggard's printing press caused delay, and the great First Folio edition did not appear till 1623.<sup>9</sup> It is a large and sumptuous volume, betraying indeed many evidences of the confusions amid which it had been compiled, but essentially well printed. It is our only source for eighteen of the plays, and for all the rest except *Pericles*, which the Folio omitted, it offers texts that, if not invariably better than the corresponding quarto texts, are always of capital importance.<sup>10</sup>

*Shakespeare's After-fame*

The posthumous life of Shakespeare, as expressed in the influence of his work on the intelligence of later generations, has been the most active of which we have record. Many of the most significant writers of the last three centuries have found channels for their own thought in criticizing Shakespeare.<sup>11</sup> This is notably true, for example, of Pope, Samuel Johnson, Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt, Swinburne, Walt Whitman, and Shaw, and in foreign countries of Voltaire and Victor Hugo, Lessing, Schlegel, Goethe, Croce, and many others. The results are often of the highest literary value, but are sometimes more important in the aesthetic history of the writers' own ages than they are for Shakespeare absolutely considered. In the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth the Shakespearean interest effervesced into a movement known as "Shakespeare idolatry."<sup>12</sup> This romantic fallacy, that Shakespeare was superhuman and could do nothing wrong, began working itself out, less than a century ago, in a wilderness of attempts to postulate some more suitable author for the immortal works than the humble "man of Stratford." Centering at first on Francis Bacon as a more learned, more conspicuous, and allegedly wiser pundit, the "heterodox" school has now so ramified that there are few eminent Elizabethans left (except, strangely, the other great poets) for whom some one has not built up a specious claim to Shakespeare's crown. Many very unlikely candidates have been chosen, on the principle, apparently, that any stick will do to beat the Stratfordian dogma; and the net profit from all this ingenious and sometimes brilliant labor is very small.

*Baconian and Other Heresies*

A scientific attitude asserted itself in the later nineteenth century in connection with the New Shakespeare Society under the direction of F. J. Furnivall. This worked out the well-known metrical tests and in other ways laid the ground for more precise study,<sup>13</sup> and it has been followed during the last forty years by the "new bibliography," illustrated in the often very illuminating work of W. W. Greg, A. W. Pollard, R. B. McKerrow, and J. Dover Wilson. Over-enthusiastic members of this school have sometimes carried research into blind alleys and introduced untenable emendations into the

<sup>9</sup> See M. H. Spielman, J. D. Wilson, and others, *Studies in the First Folio* (Oxford, 1924); E. E. Willoughby, *The Printing of the First Folio of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1932), and *A Printer of Shakespeare: The Books and Times of William Jaggard* (1934).

<sup>10</sup> See R. B. McKerrow, *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare: A Study in Editorial Method* (Oxford, 1939); and W. W. Greg, *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1942).

<sup>11</sup> See Augustus Ralli, *A History of Shakespearean Criticism* (2v, Oxford, 1932).

<sup>12</sup> See R. W. Babcock, *The Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry, 1765-1799* (Chapel Hill, 1931).

<sup>13</sup> See *Transactions of the New Shakespeare Society* (1874-92).

text, but a brilliant advance has been made in explaining the conditions under which Shakespeare's manuscripts were prepared and printed.<sup>14</sup>

Had Shakespeare died when Queen Elizabeth did, in his thirty-ninth year, he would still have had ten years more than Marlowe, and would still no doubt rank as England's greatest dramatist; but his reputation for original genius would not be exceptionally high. He would, to be sure, have left one play, *Hamlet*, as Marlowe left *Edward II*, to puzzle critics by its difference from what preceded and provoke unanswerable questions about the new path into which he would seem to have turned. The best way to bring into focus the multifold activities of his first dozen years is to view them as efforts to acquire the various "skills" of his profession. Shakespeare was unlike his own characterization of Cicero<sup>15</sup> in that *he* would always follow what other men began, and Pope's appraisal of him, if restricted to his Elizabethan period, is not very inaccurate:

For gain, not glory, wing'd his roving flight,  
And grew immortal in his own despite.<sup>16</sup>

The broadest single fact about his poems and early plays is that he is following the lines of least resistance and going with the crowd, both in choice of materials and in workmanship. *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* deal with the kind of classical story which had the greatest popular appeal at the time, and are written in the two stanza-forms most conventional in such work. His sonnets differ from their only worthy competitors, those of Sidney and Spenser, in being composed in the form that was the commonest and the easiest to write.

It is hardly possible to say whether he began as a dramatist by imitating Plautus in *The Comedy of Errors*, or Munday and Greene in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*,<sup>17</sup> or Lyly in *Love's Labor's Lost*, or Peele and Marlowe in *Henry VI*. He imitated them all, and in each case seems mainly concerned to turn out a workmanlike product along lines which the public taste had already approved. He shows at this time no prepossessions concerning metre. The broken-backed rimes of the interludes (particularly frequent in the *Comedy of Errors*), prose, pentameter couplets, blank verse, and the six-line (*ababcc*) stanza, which *Venus and Adonis* and the writing of the sonnets had made second nature for him—all mix themselves in his earliest plays in an anarchy for which it would usually be absurd to seek any special purpose. His main ambition was to learn how to write, and he was willing to adapt himself, humbly enough, to any models that were then in vogue.

The development of his style can be most clearly traced in the succession

*The Development of Shakespeare's Style*

*His Imitations*

<sup>14</sup> Examples are W. W. Greg, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1602 (Oxford, 1910); A. W. Pollard, *Richard II* (1916); P. Alexander, *Shakespeare's Henry VI and Richard III* (Cambridge, 1929); D. L. Patrick, *The Textual History of Richard III* (Stanford Univ., 1936); G. I. Duthie, *The Bad Quarto of Hamlet* (Cambridge, 1941); and *The New Cambridge Shakespeare*, ed. Sir A. Quiller-Couch and J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 1921- ).

<sup>15</sup> *Julius Caesar*, II. i. 151.

<sup>16</sup> *Epistle to Augustus*, 71 f.

<sup>17</sup> See J. Spens, *An Essay on Shakespeare's Relation to Tradition* (Oxford, 1916).

*The History Plays*

of his history plays. They are the most numerous group in his early period, and one need seek no other reasons for this than simply that they were the most popular type of drama in the 1590's and intrinsically the least difficult to construct. In all the three plays of *Henry VI* he is expanding earlier pieces,<sup>18</sup> with great deference to his predecessors, but displaying in his additions the two points of view which in the beginning were his most notable peculiarities: the sweet and lugubrious sentimentality which drugs his poems, and the humorous understanding of simple stupid men, which is perhaps the only common denominator between the three earliest comedies.

*King John* is in a way the converse of *Henry VI*, for here, instead of enlarging, he is contracting the work of a predecessor, making two plays into one. Again he shows extreme respect for his model, hardly deviating in plot or in the roll of characters; but stylistically he is now independent, for his recension borrows only a line or two from the *Troublesome Reign*. There could hardly be clearer evidence that Shakespeare's interest is at this point in style, not in structure or philosophy. The play lives for the two qualities already mentioned: the sentimentalism of Constance and Arthur, and the salty earthiness of Falconbridge.

*Richard III* and *Richard II*, which are probably earlier than *John*, devote themselves to the imitation of Marlowe. Contrary to his whole mature practice, Shakespeare here abjures prose and song, and concentrates on recapturing Marlowe's great blank verse harmonies. These plays were, with *Romeo and Juliet*, his first outstanding successes. They are not alike in tone, for *Richard II* is greatly influenced by *Edward II*; but in style it is the earlier work of Marlowe that dominates both. Both are in less degree solutions of dramatic conflicts than vehicles, such as *Tamburlaine* had been, for splendid declamation. For pure eloquence *Richard II* could hardly be surpassed, but the *Henry IV* plays show a broader mastery, and more of that ability to make the characters speak like persons in real life which was one of Shakespeare's greatest accomplishments in style.<sup>19</sup> In *Henry IV* prose, in the scenes dealing with Falstaff, has a more important function than in any previous Shakespearean play. *Henry V*, which followed, dates from the time of the opening of the Globe Theatre (summer of 1599), and may well have been written for this occasion. It has the appearance of an occasional piece, emphasizing display and variety of interest, and is extremely skilful in handling all the elements that make for broad public appeal. Thereafter Shakespeare abandoned the history play, returning to it only in another show-piece at the very end of his life, *Henry VIII* (1613).

Shakespeare's comedies,<sup>20</sup> though they, of course, illustrate the general improvement of his style during the decade from 1590 to 1600, show no such constant progress as the histories. They are, indeed, remarkably heterogeneous

*His Development in Comedy*

<sup>18</sup> For a contrary view see P. Alexander, *Shakespeare's Henry VI and Richard III* (Cambridge, 1929), and E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (1944).

<sup>19</sup> See Madeline Doran, "Imagery in *Richard II* and in *Henry IV*," *MLR*, xxxvii (1942), 113-122; J. D. Wilson, *The Fortunes of Falstaff* (1943).

<sup>20</sup> See H. B. Charlton, *Shakespearean Comedy* (1938).

in pattern. The three earliest, unlike in theme and feeling as they were, were followed by *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice*, which, though not like each other, both resemble the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* at various points. These later plays are of somewhat uncertain date. They were, however, in existence in 1598, when Meres listed both among Shakespeare's works, and both were published in 1600. Though they now rank among the most valued plays, they do not seem to have been particularly popular in their own time; nor have they very much in common with his later comedies. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* probably got a hint for its fairy element from Greene's *James IV*, and its Athenian background from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* and Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*, whereas the plot of the lovers is a more succinct rehandling of the main theme of *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. It seems to have been written, or at least recast, for a state wedding, and is the most lyrical of all the plays. It has little real resemblance to any of the rest, unless perhaps to the much later *Tempest*, which was likewise adapted to celebrate a royal wedding. *The Merchant of Venice*, on the other hand, is one of the gravest of comedies, and capable of being misread as a tragedy. It is, likewise, a play of motley ingredients and Gothic atmosphere, and has no particular congener in the Shakespeare canon.

Bibliographical evidence coincides with evidence of other kinds to show that by 1598 Shakespeare had, however unwittingly and unmethodically, attained name and fame. Two natural consequences of success—pressure towards over-production and a certain slackening of creative energy—may perhaps be observed in other comedies of the decade. *The Taming of the Shrew* is hard to date. Shakespeare may have been employed in fitting it to the stage since 1594, when some such play appears in the repertory of his company. The text printed in the Folio of 1623 presents an admirable farce, considerably superior to the *Comedy of Errors*, but not very suggestive of Shakespeare's unaided work.<sup>21</sup> The other farce, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which seems to be an offshoot of *Henry V*, belongs to the latter part of 1599 or 1600, and the tradition that it was written in great haste is easily credible. Admitting its limitations and the many textual problems it obtrudes,<sup>22</sup> one must yet rate it one of the best farces in the world. It was Shakespeare's last effort in this genre.

The period from the middle of 1599 to 1601, that is, from Essex's departure to Ireland till his ill-omened insurrection, shows Shakespeare's career traversing a kind of plateau. It was in general a period of suspended activity and indecision. The three great comedies of these years seem in their very titles to express a sort of carelessness: *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like*

*The Farces*

*The Essex Period*

<sup>21</sup> Three recent papers by R. A. Houk should be consulted: "The Integrity of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*," *JEGP*, xxxix (1940), 222-229; "The Evolution of *The Taming of the Shrew*," *PMLA* LVII (1942), 1009-1038; "Strata in *The Taming of the Shrew*," *SP*, xxxix (1942), 291-302. Also G. L. Duthie, "The Taming of a Shrew and *The Taming of the Shrew*," *RES*, xix (1943), 337-356.

<sup>22</sup> See W. W. Greg's edition (Oxford, 1910); and, for a very fanciful interpretation, J. Crofts, *Shakespeare and the Post Horses* (Bristol, 1937).

*It*, and *What You Will* (i.e., *Twelfth Night*). Carelessness has seldom been so fruitful of delight. They are escapes from thinking, anodynes against worry, inclining heavily to prose in their style, and in their themes savoring more of the world of pleasant fancy than the world of strong imagination. Their mastery of form and balance of social judgment are superb—and in these respects the latest, *Twelfth Night*, is the most perfect. They mark a gracious interlude in Shakespeare's progress, a halcyon period when he was aware of his matured powers and as yet unwilling to urge them to new tasks.

Thus, by the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, Shakespeare had brought his writing of English history plays to a close, having developed that type to the limit of its artistic possibilities; while in comedy he was floating in dead water, exploiting his elegant connoisseurship and for the moment content to take his profits as a public entertainer. As a nondramatic poet he had quite shot his bolt. *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* had no successors from his hand; and the great series of sonnets—if written to, or apropos of, Lord Southampton, as the present writer thinks they certainly were—can scarcely be later than 1597.<sup>23</sup> Only in tragedy is there any close link between Shakespeare in Elizabeth's reign and in King James's.

#### Tragedy

#### Titus Andronicus

Apart from the history plays, Shakespeare's known output in tragedy before 1603 consists of but four plays, separated from each other by considerable intervals of time and very remarkable differences of manner. All four, however, belong to the revenge or vendetta type of play familiar in Seneca, and they all owe more to Kyd than to Marlowe. There is no good reason for denying *Titus Andronicus* to Shakespeare.<sup>24</sup> One should hardly wish to do so, for it is a brilliant specimen of its repulsive kind. Harmoniously worded and very well constructed, it holds the interest of any reader who will read it, and even on the modern stage is almost lethally effective. It is the only representative of the tragedy of blood, except *Richard III*, which can fairly challenge the supremacy of Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*. Like that play, and like *Hamlet*, it makes good use of quasi-insanity, and in Act v, scene ii, has a movement cleverly varied from Kyd's play-within-the-play. It is, on the whole, closer to Seneca than the *Spanish Tragedy* is, and borrows its culminating horror, the banquet of human flesh, direct from the *Thyestes*.

#### Romeo and Juliet

*Romeo and Juliet* is so different that one easily overlooks its Senecan affinities; for here Shakespeare stresses not the horror but the pity of it, and writes, as it were, a Senecan play to end Senecan plays. But one should not overlook the vendetta spirit and Tybalt as the evil genius of the piece, marking Verona as a kind of counterpart of the Senecan Thebes. That we do so is due to the characteristic in Shakespeare that so often allows his interest in persons to drive a play athwart its normal course. As with Shylock and Falstaff, there occurred an unleashing of romantic sympathy for Romeo and Juliet which threatened at every moment to turn the drama

<sup>23</sup> See editions of the sonnets by T. Brooke (1936), H. E. Rollins, (2v, Philadelphia, 1944; *New Variorum* ed.), and R. M. Alden (Boston, 1916).

<sup>24</sup> See H. T. Price, "The Authorship of *Titus Andronicus*," *JEGP*, XLII (1943), 55-81.



into tragicomedy. What uninformed reader of the first four acts could expect a tragic conclusion? It is this swirling conflict of intuitive sympathy with predetermined form that hollows out the deepest reaches of Shakespeare's art. It would be foolish, however, to ignore the tragic pattern and regard the play merely as a story of young lovers who met astonishingly bad luck. The broader tragic theme, stated in the prefatory sonnet, is a main constituent of the play's success, which was from the first enormous. It was perhaps the earliest of Shakespeare's great triumphs, and in its first form may even be as early as 1591.<sup>25</sup> One may wonder that he never wrote another tragedy like it. This is perhaps the key to Shakespeare's remarkable originality and development, that, while imitating others so easily, he so resolutely forbore to imitate his own best things.

The next tragedy, after a number of years, was *Julius Caesar*, which was produced at the Globe in the autumn of 1599, immediately after *Henry V*.<sup>26</sup> Mechanically, these two plays are much alike, and they exhibit the culmination of Shakespeare's middle style. The language of the stage could not be more crystal clear or more simply eloquent, and the dramatic ideas could not be more intelligibly and interestingly presented, or better chosen to fit the tastes of the average man. As a writer for the million, Shakespeare had in these plays reached the top of his career, and the million have never failed to delight in them. *Julius Caesar* can still be called a Senecan tragedy, complete with ghost and revenge-motif; but it is given a bias-movement by the character of Brutus, which evidently bothered Shakespeare as he turned his attention from Holinshed's boldly two-dimensional sketches to Plutarch's more ambiguous figures. For the understanding of the average playgoer he allows Brutus to remain the idealistic hero that Plutarch called him; but he had inward doubts which a careful and repeated reader of the play begins to share; while Cassius, so clearly slated for the villain's part, refuses to maintain that status and ends by robbing his colleague of much of our sympathy.

Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, though a fine and effective stage type, is not a thoroughly harmonized portrait. He is a preliminary drawing for Shakespeare's Hamlet, who has many of the same difficulties to face and is of similar mental fiber. It is perhaps not too rash to assume that the unresolved doubts which half appear in the stage-character of Brutus drove Shakespeare to attempts at deeper introspection, and so to higher and somewhat extra-dramatic triumphs. Shakespeare's standard play is *Hamlet*.<sup>27</sup> In some ways

<sup>25</sup> See H. B. Charlton, "Romeo and Juliet as an Experimental Tragedy" (British Academy Shakespeare lecture, 1939); T. Brooke, "Shakespeare Remembers his Youth in Stratford," *Essays and Studies in Honor of Carleton Brown* (1940), 253-256; H. R. Walley, "Shakespeare's Debt to Marlowe in *Romeo and Juliet*," *PQ*, xxi (1942), 257-267.

<sup>26</sup> See H. Granville-Barker, "From *Henry V* to *Hamlet*" (British Academy Shakespeare lecture, 1925).

<sup>27</sup> A small shelf of works bearing on *Hamlet* might include the following: A. A. Raven, *A Hamlet Bibliography and Reference Guide* (Chicago, 1936); J. Schick, *Corpus Hamleticum: Hamlet in Sage und Dichtung, Kunst und Musik* (Leipzig, 1938); *Hamlet*, ed. J. Q. Adams (Boston, 1929); T. M. Parrott and H. Craig, *The Tragedy of Hamlet: A Critical Edition of the Second Quarto* (Princeton, 1938); E. E. Stoll, *Hamlet, an Historical and Comparative Study*



## Hamlet

this strange refashioning of an old melodrama has fixed itself in the minds of all sorts of people as both the truest mirror of Shakespeare's personality and the ripest production of English literary art. The man in the street, the professional actor, the poet, and the philosopher all agree in this truism. Hardly any other critical dogma about Shakespeare is so universally accepted, and yet the wisest of the play's critics have not been able to explain very clearly why this should be so. They can only agree that the charm and value of *Hamlet* are mysteriously incorporated in the personality of the hero—"the best part, I believe, that ever man acted," as Pepys was saying in 1668—so that, though the tragedy contains many other brilliant characters and abounds in violent action, the proverbial "*Hamlet* without the character of *Hamlet*" has become the classic way of describing a literary vacuum. Hamlet's individuality suffuses the entire play, giving a special reality and poignancy to all the parts.

To sketch the development of the Hamlet story is to trace the long evolution of an ideal of the human mind. Out of a tangle of Norse pagan myth Saxo Grammaticus produced his character of Amleth, the grim and purposeful avenger of his father's murder. This story, through the French version of Belleforest, had before 1589 been made into an English play by a bold and vigorous adapter, presumably Kyd, who evidently (though his version has not been preserved intact) overlaid the realistic paganism of the North with supernatural paganism from Greece and Rome, introducing the ghost and other Senecan machinery and changing the crafty assumption of idiocy in Saxo's hero into neurotic brainsickness. Shakespeare may have been acting in this play in 1594, when we know that the Chamberlain's Company had an interest in it, and he may already have begun revising it.<sup>28</sup> When his revision was complete, as it first appears in the quarto of 1604, the theme had been altered more than it is quite easy to realize. *Hamlet* was really no longer a play of revenge; it was a play of life and death and of man's ambiguous relation to them both. It was the passionate protest of a keen and honest thinker against the inescapable sophistications of thought, which make everything *seem* and yet can give no assurance that anything is absolutely true. Hamlet enters the play expostulating against the hypocrisy of appearances. "A little more than kin and less than kind"; "Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not 'seems.'" The keynote of his tragedy, the most profound and melancholy saying in the play, is the cry forced from him as the crisis approaches: "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so."

(Minneapolis, 1919), and *Hamlet the Man* (English Assoc., pamphlet 91, 1935); A. J. A. Waldock, *Hamlet, a Study in Critical Method* (Cambridge, 1931); J. D. Wilson, *The Manuscripts of Shakespeare's Hamlet and the Problems of its Transmission* (2v, Cambridge, 1934), and *What Happens in Hamlet* (Cambridge, 1935, 2ed., 1937); L. L. Schücking, *Der Sinn des Hamlet* (Leipzig, 1935; English trans., *The Meaning of Hamlet*, Oxford, 1937); W. W. Lawrence, "Hamlet and the Mouse Trap," *PMLA*, LIV (1940), 709-735; J. E. Hankins, *The Character of Hamlet and other Essays* (Chapel Hill, 1941); C. S. Lewis, *Hamlet, the Prince or the Poem?* (Brit. Acad. Shakespeare lecture, 1942).

<sup>28</sup> See C. M. Lewis, *The Genesis of Hamlet* (1907).

Thus for Shakespeare, at this period of devastating clarity, man stands between life and death as between two worlds, both of which elude his grasp and leave him nothing but the chimeras of thought. In the soliloquy, "To be or not to be," Hamlet hesitates to slay himself, for, after all, death may be worse than life. In the beautifully contrasted soliloquy, "Now might I do it pat," he hesitates to slay Claudius, for life may be worse than death. Certitude is a boon enjoyed only by paltry minds: by the parrot actor who feels the fiction of Hecuba's woes like fact, or the indiscriminating Fortinbras who puts all to stake "even for an eggshell." Straws though these are, Hamlet grasps eagerly at them, and for brief moments imagines they will support him in the quicksands of thought. They can, of course, do nothing for one who, while feeling so exquisitely "what a piece of work is a man," must yet confess, "man delights not me." To spare Claudius and slay Polonius, devise death for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and walk open-eyed himself into his fate: to him these things are alike indifferent, for death and life are to him equally unreal.

One sees, then, how Shakespeare has lived himself into Hamlet till he produced—probably not in one writing, but after many—a perfect tabernacle for the questioning modern brain. The avenging prince of Saxo's chronicle lived in a dark but entirely material world, and was plain as a pikestaff in his response to its challenge. The hero of Kyd lived among ancient ghosts and nightmares, and struggled with internal rather than external obstacles to action. Shakespeare's Hamlet is a harmony and vastly subtler evolution of them both: he brings the uncompromising mentality of the Norse Amleth into the crepuscular world of Kyd. In his psychology the external and internal are wholly blended. Thought, with its illusions and illuminations, is the only great reality; under its force the so-called facts of material and moral life are dissipated into impalpable fog.

*Hamlet*, which in Shakespeare's mature version seems to date from about 1601, and may owe a good deal to the appalling tragedy of Essex in that year, is a play of far greater philosophical density than anything that had preceded it. The Elizabethan Shakespeare had acquired an unrivalled skill in playcraft and a style yet more unequalled; but, except in his greatest sonnets, he had hitherto hardly scratched the surface of his mind. He had done his worldly task and ta'en his wages; and when Elizabeth died, he faced the new era, as one might say, with only *Hamlet* in his scrip.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Certain passages in the preceding paragraphs are quoted from *Shakespeare's Principal Plays* (1935), pp. 48-68, which discusses the early plays more fully than is here possible.



PART III

The Early Stuarts and the  
Commonwealth  
(1603-1660)



# I

## Shakespeare under James

Horatio's farewell to the dying Hamlet,

Good night, sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest,

was explained by Malone as an allusion to the somewhat similar words with which the Earl of Essex went to his death on February 25, 1601: "When my life and body shall part, send Thy blessed angels, which may receive my soul and convey it to the joys of heaven." This is not impossible; and though skepticism is recommended toward most modern attempts to read politics into Shakespeare, there is every reason to suppose that the death of the young and romantic Essex, involving also Southampton's peril and disgrace, was a more important dividing line in the dramatist's progress than the death of the old Queen twenty-five months later. Essex's attempted uprising may have been a puny thing, but it marked with ghastly conspicuousness the breach of all the loyalties which the poet, and indeed his whole generation, had held unassailable.

*Shakespeare  
and Essex*

Shakespeare's Elizabethan period really ended with the sunny comedies, of which *Twelfth Night* is the last, and the questioning spirit which we may call Jacobean is strong in the play that most immediately followed *Hamlet*, that is, *Troilus and Cressida*. This was registered for publication, February 7, 1603, a few weeks before Elizabeth's death, and is most naturally grouped with the "problem comedies," *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well that Ends Well*.<sup>1</sup> Like *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida* is a very long play, crammed with poetry and social discontent. The dramatic structure is baffling, and the concluding scenes, though not unshakespearean in style, are so scamped as to be ineffective. In the form in which it survives it was probably not intended for public production; but as the poet's grieved and angry analysis of the disintegration of a heroic age it is quite priceless, and in its best parts it reaches Shakespeare's highest poetic plane.<sup>2</sup> To about the same period and spirit may be assigned the revision of *All's Well that Ends Well*, which is composed in two very different styles. In its first version it may have been the *Love's Labor's Won* that Meres mentions in 1598. Helena, the chief character, is one of the exuberant Elizabethan heroines,

*The "Dark  
Comedies"*

*Troilus and  
Cressida*

<sup>1</sup> See W. W. Lawrence, *Shakespeare's Problem Comedies* (1931).

<sup>2</sup> See O. J. Campbell, *Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida* (San Marino, 1938); and for different views, T. Brooke, "Shakespeare's Study in Culture and Anarchy," *Yale Rev.*, xvii (1928), 571-577, and W. W. Lawrence, "Troilus, Cressida and Thersites," *MLR*, xxxvii (1942), 422-437.



All's Well  
that Ends  
Well

capable of anything except failure and the failure to please. She stoops to conquer with the same irresistible and unreal grace as Rosalind and Viola; but the unpleasant figures of Bertram and Parolles are developed in the later style of social irony and disgust. They belong in a different world from Helena's, and often speak a language that varies as much in its cynicism as in its metrical form from that of the romantic passages. One of the more notable things about the play is the loving care with which Shakespeare has idealized the elderly characters of the king, the countess, and Lord Lafeu. His sources gave him nothing here, and for the purposes of the plot these persons need no such emphasis. They seem to be there to harp upon and to illustrate the virtues of the older time, and to weight the author's denunciation of modern profligacy.

Measure for  
Measure

*Measure for Measure*, acted at court December 26, 1604, was certainly written for King James, who is incidentally flattered in the person of the duke. It is one of Shakespeare's most sociological plays, along with *King Lear* and *Timon of Athens*, which in this respect it resembles; and in the relevance of its theme it is the most contemporary. A recent writer has called it, of all the plays, "the one which bears in it most clearly and unmistakably the impress of Shakespeare's mind and outlook."<sup>3</sup> Its heroine, Isabella, is very beautifully depicted, but it is not a play of love. The problems it deals with are those of city government and of the police court, and its main lesson points the need for sincerity and common sense in public affairs. It is less angry and more seemingly mature than the other dark comedies, offering a more constructive criticism of the new life and carrying psychological analysis in the chief figure, Angelo, almost as far inward as *Hamlet* had done.<sup>4</sup>

The satirical and contemptuous attitude was not normal with Shakespeare; and though in the dark comedies just mentioned he went for a time with the crowd, as he had so often done, the great effect upon him of the Jacobean disillusionment was to induce reflections upon the nature of evil which crystalized into a nobler and deeper poetry than he had yet written. The Elizabethan Shakespeare had not seriously believed in villainy. Richard the Third and even Aaron the Moor tug strongly at our sympathies, and keep their atrocities at so grand a pitch that average human experience hardly resents them. The villains of *The Merchant of Venice* and *Julius Caesar*, Shylock and Cassius, rather turn the tables on their author, as every one has noted; and if Falstaff was intended for the villain of *Henry IV*, he also very gloriously missed his cue. The villains of the high comedies, Don John, Oliver, and Duke Frederick, are bad-tempered dyspeptics whom Shakespeare pushes hither and yon through his plots but denies any real attention. Even

<sup>3</sup> C. F. E. Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery* (1935), p. 290. The essay on *Measure for Measure* in Walter Pater's *Appreciations* (1889) is one of the first serious discussions of the play and still deserves attention.

<sup>4</sup> For a somewhat divergent view, brilliantly developed, see R. W. Chambers, *The Jacobean Shakespeare and "Measure for Measure"* (British Academy Shakespeare lecture, 1938).

Claudius, though capable of the blackest deeds when sufficiently pressed, is a finer fellow than his nephew would like to believe.

The three great tragedies of *Othello*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth*<sup>5</sup> stand very close together, and apart from everything which preceded, in their assertion that the world is full of inscrutable and absorbingly interesting evil. They are essentially different from *Hamlet* and from the group of dark comedies: from the latter in that there is nothing in them (unless here and there in *King Lear*) of the satirist, the man who hates the world he lives in and attacks the individuals he dislikes; and from *Hamlet* in that the evil they deal with is wholly objective, not largely a matter of subjective maladjustment to one's environment. There is no suspicion of pique in these plays. For Shakespeare and for his company the advent of King James was unmixed good fortune.<sup>6</sup> He was never happier in a worldly way, few dramatists have ever been, than when, as the laureled favorite of the new court and the idol of playgoers, he sat down to wrestle with the dark work which *Lear* proposes and which in essence continues through the three plays:

*The Great  
Tragic  
Triad*

Let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?

It is the most elusive of problems, and Shakespeare has made it more tractable in each of the plays by studying it in almost over-simplified human types. *Lear* and *Macbeth* are placed in very ancient times, not from historic interest, for both plays are crowded with contemporary allusion, but in order to get the characters reduced to their most primitive essentials. *Othello* secures a like effect by presenting its domestic tragedy against a background of war, which likewise pares life down to fundamentals.

*Othello*, which the young Macaulay called "perhaps the greatest work in the world,"<sup>7</sup> comes near to meriting that daring superlative. For one thing, it is, with the possible exception of *Romeo and Juliet*, the most drenched in poetry of all the plays—if we understand the greatest poetry to be that which voices the most compelling emotions in the most irresistible and bewitching language.<sup>8</sup> The music of the great speeches of *Othello* and *Desdemona* is the loveliest in the whole Shakespearean symphony, and these two characters, the most unsophisticated of his creatures, take precedence—not intellectually, but emotionally—over all the men and women in the plays,

*Othello*

Adam, the goodliest man of men since born  
His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.

<sup>5</sup> The most complete interpretation of these plays is still that of A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (2ed., 1905). See also Allardyce Nicoll, *Studies in Shakespeare* (1927), six lectures on Shakespearean tragedy. The commentary in the separate editions of J. Q. Adams is very helpful. The contemporary psychological background is covered by L. B. Campbell, *Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes, Slaves of Passion* (Cambridge, 1930).

<sup>6</sup> See C. J. Sisson, *The Mythical Sorrows of Shakespeare* (British Academy Shakespeare lecture, 1934).

<sup>7</sup> T. B. Macaulay in *Knight's Quarterly Magazine* (Jan., 1824, p. 219). See E. E. Stoll, *Othello, an Historical and Comparative Study* (Minneapolis, 1913).

<sup>8</sup> See G. Wilson Knight, "The *Othello* Music," in *The Wheel of Fire* (Oxford, 1930), pp. 107-131.

So one thinks of Othello and Desdemona in the gallery of Shakespeare's figures. Milton's words remind us that Paradise was tenanted by Adam, Eve, and the Devil. The Satan of *Othello*, Iago, is also a character of Miltonic proportions, romantically and sympathetically conceived: a blindly wandering spirit whose evil is the perversion of potentialities for good, whose psychoses are those of a mischievous boy, forever subject to rash urges and unwitting of consequences. He is Shakespeare's greatest and most likable villain, but the impression he makes has been somewhat distorted by two misleading phrases of great critics: Coleridge's "motive-hunting of a motiveless malignity," and Bradley's "deadly coldness." If we cannot share Shakespeare's intellectual sympathy with Iago and his sense of the pity of Iago's case, we shall dislike the plot of the play and underrate the hero and heroine.<sup>9</sup> *Othello* is, finally, the most perfectly constructed of all the tragedies, the most classic and harmoniously molded work of art. Its dramatic method is the highest exemplification of what is meant in Sir William Watson's tribute to the poet,

How welcome, after gong and cymbal's din,  
The continuity, the long, slow slope,  
And vast curves of the gradual violin.<sup>10</sup>

This is not quite to say that *Othello* is Shakespeare's greatest tragedy. Of no one tragedy can that be said. *Othello* lacks the supreme intellectuality and intimate revelation of the author's self which *Hamlet* offers; it lacks the tremendous world-criticism and cosmic sweep of *Lear* and *Macbeth*. But it is (with *Antony and Cleopatra*) the most richly human, and in the Greek sense the most beautiful of them all.

King Lear

*Othello* was performed at court, November 1, 1604. *King Lear* and *Macbeth* followed in quick succession. It is not quite certain which of the two is earlier; both must have been in existence by the end of 1606, though external evidence seems to be lacking in the case of *Macbeth*. *Lear* is a study of private selfishness; *Macbeth* of ambition, that is, public selfishness. In *Lear*<sup>11</sup> the theme is bourgeois, in spite of the rank of the protagonists; the vices portrayed are mean and the virtues homely. The simplification is extreme; men and women have been stripped of the vestments of culture and even of their formal Christianity. *Lear* is a barbarian, worshiping sun, moon, stars, and pagan gods.<sup>12</sup> The springs of conduct are laid starkly bare, and the Browningsque moral, "It's wiser being good than bad," is cut deeply into this monolithic play. It asserts the self-destroying nature of sin and

<sup>9</sup> See T. Brooke, "The Romantic Iago," *Yale Rev.*, vii (1918), 349-359; E. E. Stoll, *Shakespeare and Other Masters* (Cambridge, Mass., 1940), chs. v-vii.

<sup>10</sup> Epigram, "After Reading *Tamburlaine the Great*."

<sup>11</sup> See S. A. Tannenbaum, *Shakespeare's "King Lear": A Concise Bibliography* (1940); and note two important recent papers by W. W. Greg: *The Variants in the First Quarto of King Lear* (Bibl. Soc., 1940); "Time, Place, and Politics in *King Lear*," *MLR*, xxxv (1940), 431-446.

<sup>12</sup> For the relation of the play to its sources see R. W. Chambers, "*King Lear*" (Glasgow, 1940; W. P. Ker Memorial Lecture); W. W. Greg, "The Date of *King Lear* and Shakespeare's Use of Earlier Versions of the Story," *Library*, xx (1940), 377-400.

the world-regenerating power of such naïve virtue as is pictured in Kent, Albany, Cordelia, and Edgar.

Almost equally primitive in its setting, *Macbeth*<sup>13</sup> is a study of two characters, whose finest quality, their mutual love, becomes under evil ambition the means of their ruin. Nothing in Shakespeare is more poignant than the interplay of influence between Macbeth and his wife. Without the other, neither would have sinned; for Macbeth's exorbitant ambition has plenty of natural checks and balances, and her urgency in crime is so wholly altruistic and so uncomprehending as to be almost virtuous. And hardly anything in Shakespeare is so just and delicate as the chiasmic movement of their two minds under the stress of sin. Macbeth, having by the first murder violated his imaginative controls, finds his imagination atrophy and die, till in the awful soliloquy, "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow," his mind is as empty as a lunar landscape; whereas Lady Macbeth, giving the dare to the imaginative bugbears she has never felt ("A little water clears us of this deed"), is bedeviled to death by the new fancies that are her penalty. No more than in *King Lear* is there any Christian feeling in *Macbeth*.<sup>14</sup> In both plays Shakespeare is studying minds cleaned, like laboratory specimens, of everything extrinsic. This, perhaps, is what gives them their universal power and makes them seem so much like Aeschylus.

It would appear that, while writing *Macbeth*, Shakespeare was meditating another Roman tragedy out of Plutarch which should be the sequel to *Julius Caesar*. Macbeth's mind is strangely occupied with the story of Mark Antony. In iii. i. he rather forcedly compares Banquo and himself to Octavius and Antony; in v. viii. he speaks of playing "the Roman fool" and dying on his own sword; and Banquo, in the scene with the witches (i. iii. 84 f.), uses words,

have we eaten on the insane root  
That takes the reason prisoner?

which have very little meaning for persons who have not read Plutarch's account of Antony's Parthian campaign.<sup>15</sup> *Antony and Cleopatra* was registered for publication on May 20, 1608, nearly nine years after the date of *Julius Caesar*. That play had ended with the battle of Philippi in 42 B.C.; this one proceeds with the story from Fulvia's death in 40 B.C. to that of Cleopatra in 30.<sup>16</sup> Historically, it is a much looser play than its predecessor, just as the second part of *Henry IV* is looser than the first; but psychologically it is far more intense. The characters are older, hard-bitten veterans and sophisticates, who in the decade (more or less) since Philippi have definitely entered middle age. The important ones are of the age of Shakespeare

Antony and  
Cleopatra

<sup>13</sup> See S. A. Tannenbaum, *Shakespeare's "Macbeth": A Concise Bibliography* (1939); E. E. Stoll, "Source and Motive in *Macbeth* and *Othello*," *RES*, xix (1943). 25-32; A. N. Stunz, "The Date of *Macbeth*," *ELH*, ix (1942). 95-105.

<sup>14</sup> For the supernatural atmosphere see W. C. Curry, *Shakespeare's Philosophical Patterns* (Baton Rouge, 1937).

<sup>15</sup> See *Shakespeare's Plutarch* (Shakespeare Classics, 1909), II. 72 f.

<sup>16</sup> For this play as well as *Coriolanus* see M. W. MacCallum, *Shakespeare's Roman Plays and Their Background* (1910); and G. Wilson Knight, *The Imperial Theme* (Oxford, 1931).

himself, who is now mature enough to appreciate Plutarch as he had not fully done in *Julius Caesar*, and who uses him with a superb mastery.

The influence of *Macbeth* is strong in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Here also, and even more distinctly than in *Macbeth*, the tragedy is two-fold, treating the fate of a devoted pair so opposite in mind and temperament that each brings out the best in the other only at the cost of ruin. To make this clear, Shakespeare has ventured his very boldest experiment in structure, for he has written two conclusions into *Antony and Cleopatra*. The fourth act is Antony's catastrophe, the fifth act Cleopatra's. To maintain this doubled tension was perhaps the hardest task his creative energy ever undertook. By all reason the fifth act should be an anticlimax; by all experience it is not. There is really no fourth act in the play, to build up for the great *finales*, and the middle portion is therefore so broken and synoptic that the modern stage can hardly attempt it. Here Shakespeare was obliged to construct with fragments, making lines do the work of scenes, and his genius responded extraordinarily to the challenge. A short speech of Cleopatra illustrates:

O my lord, my lord,  
Forgive my fearful sails! I little thought  
You would have followèd (III. xi. 54-56).

There is no more, but this tells all. Cleopatra entered the play demanding a measure of Antony's love; the first line she speaks is,

If it be love indeed, tell me how much.

At Actium she found an opportunity for the test, and the test, though costly beyond almost anything in history, was successful. From this point Cleopatra's temperament changes and she grows gentle; from this point she is a satisfied woman. Whole acts have been written about less; but Shakespeare has achieved a brilliant economy by applying the wisdom of the Wife of Bath to one of the puzzles of classical history. The lovers' progress, from Romeo and Juliet, the victims of chance, to Troilus and Cressida, the victims of environment, and so to Antony and Cleopatra, the victims of their own character, shows the upward climb of Shakespeare's art. *Antony and Cleopatra* is the greatest of these great plays. It is a play of such compacted power and understanding that one can hardly admit that Shakespeare wrote any greater.

#### Coriolanus

In *Coriolanus* he turns back from the lush civilization of the Augustan age to the infancy of the Roman republic and to the primitive types which particularly attracted his analysis. *Coriolanus*, which is of about the same date as *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607-8) and likewise based on Plutarch, deals with a large and simple hero conceived on the lines of Othello, Lear, and Macbeth. He might be an African chief or a robber captain. His generous and childish nature is wholly dominated by pride, and his mother and wife are framed in the same proportions. It is evident that they have no chance of survival in a complex society; progress rests with the mean

little people, the Siciniuses and Brutuses, and with the horrid mob who demand betterment of their condition. *Coriolanus* is one of the most political of Shakespeare's plays. Hazlitt has described it as the creed of an aristocrat, and so it is, if one judges by poetic sympathies; but it is no play on which to base a reasoned defense of oligarchy. Probably the poet wrote into it his nostalgia for the heroes of his youth, the colorful, useless, and totally extinct barons of the Wars of the Roses, and perhaps he thought of Sir Walter Raleigh; but his obvious purpose in selecting the subject was the same as in *Othello*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth*: to find an uncomplicated specimen for his psychological analysis.

Another play, *Timon of Athens*, belongs in this category, a play only partly Shakespeare's and of uncertain date. Stylistically, so far as Shakespeare's part goes, it most suggests *King Lear*, and it is animated by the same bitter wrath against ingratitude. Timon's story has been interpreted as a parable of the fate of Essex,<sup>17</sup> and, from the point of view of an adherent of Essex, there is a similarity between them. On the other hand, the theme seems to have come to Shakespeare's notice in Plutarch's Life of Antony, and is not very likely to have been worked up thence until *Antony and Cleopatra* was finished. Moreover, there is plausibility in Sir Edmund Chambers' suggestion<sup>18</sup> that the incompleteness of the play might be due to a physical breakdown (not recorded), which could have cut short the poet's tragic period and put an end for evermore to these strenuous analyses of the human mind.

*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, was entered on the Stationers' Register the same day as *Antony and Cleopatra* (May 20, 1608), but it is marked by a later style and might naturally have followed the hypothetical illness just referred to.<sup>19</sup> It is Shakespeare's only from the third act on, and no reason can be imagined for allowing the author of the first two acts to do what he did, except that Shakespeare's services and advice were unprocurable at the time. The story is from Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and is an outgrowth of the travelogue-and-missing-persons literature of the Alexandrian Greek romances. Shakespeare's part begins with the announcement of Marina's birth, and his contribution was primarily the creation of a new type of heroine, gentler, less self-confident, and more childish-seeming than those in his earlier comedies. To the disgust of Ben Jonson (whose proclaimed contempt may have caused the exclusion of *Pericles* from the Shakespeare Folio), this ill-constructed play had an outstanding and long success, for the Jacobean were well convinced that they were a coarse generation, and they found the same zest the dark ages did in virgin saints.

Such figures, drawn from a paternal or even grandfatherly point of view, and suffused with the enchantment of distance, appear in all the later plays,

<sup>17</sup> See Dixon Wecter, "Shakespeare's Purpose in *Timon of Athens*," *PMLA*, XLIII (1928), 701-721.

<sup>18</sup> *William Shakespeare*, I, 86.

<sup>19</sup> See, however, T. S. Graves, "On the Date and Significance of *Pericles*," *MP*, XIII (1916), 177-188.

Timon of  
Athens

The Last  
Plays

Pericles



Cymbeline,  
The Winter's Tale,  
and The  
Tempest

*Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*.<sup>20</sup> There is a half-holiday atmosphere about the entire group, a valedictory note, as of a virtuoso displaying his skill for his own delight. They are all *tours de force*, special exercises in difficult technique. *Cymbeline* practises the utmost intricacy in tying and resolving a complex plot. *The Tempest* performs the gratuitous feat of limiting a highly unreal fable to the strictest unity of time, place, and action. *The Winter's Tale* takes two half-plays, one a realistic tragedy, the other an idyllic pastoral, and glues them together with a Chorus and the lapse of sixteen years. There are critics who will condemn one of these plays and laud the others;<sup>21</sup> but the spirit and essential genius are the same in all, and each in its particular way is unique. They are plays of light touch and easy mastery, but they should not be called plays of easy optimism. Shakespeare wrote nothing after the opening of the seventeenth century which ignores or palliates the evil in the world. The brothel scenes in *Pericles* and the workings of Leontes' jealousy in *The Winter's Tale* are as foul as anything he has pictured; the bad characters in *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest* are fully as unforgivable and as unforgiven as any earlier reprobates. If Cloten and his mother, or Antonio and Sebastian, seem relatively inconsiderable factors in the final balance which these last plays present, that is in no way at variance with Shakespeare's philosophy in the so-called tragic period. He never wrote anything so dark or cynical as to hide his pious faith that the good elements in life are enduring and constructive, while the evil must by their own nature reform themselves or perish.

The wheel of Shakespeare's art came full circle and left no broken arc. Though he died at fifty-two, his life is one of the completest of which record remains. The last plays show his mind returning, as his body returned, to the pastoral and richly storied country out of which it had come. He had four or five years of ease at Stratford, varied, so far as we know, only by the rather minor help he gave his pupil Fletcher in some dramatic spectacles for the Globe: *The Two Noble Kinsmen*,<sup>22</sup> which attempted to bring on the stage the chivalrous magnificence of Chaucer's longest Canterbury Tale; and the great pageant of *Henry VIII*, which, ending in the elaborate show of Queen Elizabeth's baptism, was thereby also a contribution to the current rejoicings over the marriage of her namesake, the Princess Elizabeth (1613). It was fitting that the "chambers" or small cannon, which had added to the joyous clamor of *Henry V* when the Globe was new, should be employed again in *Henry VIII*; and it was rather fitting that on this occasion (June 29, 1613) one of them should misfire and reduce to ashes the shell out of which the genius of Shakespeare was departing.

<sup>20</sup> See E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's Last Plays* (1938); E. E. Stoll, *Shakespeare and Other Masters* (1940), ch. viii; Theodore Spencer, "Appearance and Reality in Shakespeare's Last Plays," *MP*, xxxix (1942), 265-274.

<sup>21</sup> E.g., F. R. Leavis, "The Criticism of Shakespeare's Latest Plays," *Scrutiny*, x (1942), 339-345.

<sup>22</sup> See Theodore Spencer, "*The Two Noble Kinsmen*," *MP*, xxxvi (1939), 255-276.

## II

### Jacobean Drama: I. Dramatists of the Old School<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Dekker<sup>2</sup> (c. 1572-1632) wrote under the influence of Marlowe and Shakespeare; echoes of both can be found almost everywhere in his work, but he was a looser technician and in his total effect is more likely to recall Greene. *Old Fortunatus*, based upon much the same sort of German folklore as *Doctor Faustus* and full of Marlovian allusions, does not quite reach tragic intensity, and ends by being an improvement on Greene's *Orlando Furioso*.<sup>3</sup> *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, though it imitates *Romeo and Juliet*<sup>4</sup> and contains little hints at *Henry V*, which was being played at the Globe when it went on at the Rose, has more of the pleasant homeliness and romantic variety of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, from which it borrows the name of its hero, Lacy, and the idea of a disguised noble wooing a socially unsuitable sweetheart.

Dekker is first heard of in 1598, in the service of Marlowe's old company, the Lord Admiral's, for whom, according to Henslowe's Diary, he wrote ten plays and collaborated in about thirty in the period from 1598 to 1602. In the second year, 1599, he reached the peak of his production with the two plays just mentioned, *Old Fortunatus* and *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, both of which were acted at Queen Elizabeth's court during the Christmas season of that year. Thereafter, though he lived for an entire generation longer, he never did anything better or essentially different. Romance and realism are never separate in Dekker. He loved the fairy tale and loved the streets of London, and he mingled the two in most of his plays in a manner to recall the less categorical days of Peele and Greene. His wildest

<sup>1</sup> See W. W. Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, Vol. I. plays to 1616 (1939) and for plays printed after 1616, Greg's *List of English Plays written before 1643 and printed before 1700* (1900); G. E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (2v, Oxford, 1941- ); U. M. Ellis-Fermor, *The Jacobean Drama* (1936); H. W. Wells, *Elizabethan and Jacobean Playwrights* (1939); Gamaliel Bradford, *Elizabethan Women* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936). There is still value in J. R. Lowell, *The Old English Dramatists* (1893) and A. C. Swinburne, *The Age of Shakespeare* (1908). T. S. Eliot, *Elizabethan Essays* (1934) contains brief reviews of Jonson, Middleton, Heywood, Tourneur, Ford, Massinger, and Marston (besides Marlowe and Shakespeare).

<sup>2</sup> R. H. Shepherd, *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker* (4v, 1873); five plays are reprinted in the Mermaid Series with introduction by E. Rhys; criticism in M. L. Hunt, *Thomas Dekker* (1911); A. H. Bullen, *Elizabethans* (1924), pp. 73-94; K. L. Gregg, *Thomas Dekker, a Study in Economic and Social Backgrounds* (Seattle, 1924). See S. A. Tannenbaum, *Thomas Dekker: A Concise Bibliography* (1939).

<sup>3</sup> Dekker's devil-play, *If It Be Not Good, the Devil Is in It* (1612), uses the Friar Rush legend, as well as much other diabolical machinery, including Guy Fawkes; but it is too incoherent to be entertaining. The same disorderliness appears in a later tragicomedy, *Match Me in London* (1631), a play the present writer cannot praise.

<sup>4</sup> See R. A. Law, "The Shoemakers' Holiday and *Romeo and Juliet*," *SP*, xxi (1924). 356-361.

piecework was done for an occasion, in 1601, when he grafted some very delightful scenes satirizing Ben Jonson upon an unfinished romantic tragedy of William Rufus and called it *Satiromastix*, in order that Shakespeare's company and the Children of Paul's might have a quick answer to Jonson's *Poetaster*.

*His Primitive Art*

By Jonson's standards Dekker was a primitive playwright; "a very simple honest fellow," the former called him, and "a dresser of plays about the town here."<sup>5</sup> But his art is so deeply rooted in poetry that it has the quality of other primitive things, the ability to survive and flourish amid conditions that would kill a more specialized type. Dekker thrived even on collaboration. Much of his best work is in plays he did with men quite unlike himself: in *Patient Grissell* (1600) with Chettle and Haughton, in three plays with Webster,<sup>6</sup> in *The Roaring Girl* (1611) with Middleton, *The Virgin Martyr* (c. 1620) with Massinger, *The Sun's Darling* (1624) with Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton* (c. 1622) with Ford and William Rowley, and the lost play which must have resembled the last named, *The Late Murder in Whitechapel* (1624) with Ford, Rowley, and Webster.<sup>7</sup> Dekker's function in all these is to keep a current of the older poetry flowing into the new dramaturgy.<sup>8</sup> He may have had Middleton's assistance, though slightly, in the first of the two great plays of *The Honest Whore* (1604-1608). The theme is the romantic one of the converted courtesan, ultra-romantically presented on a background of starkest realism. The scene is Milan, but the subject, of course, is London. One play ends at Bedlam, the other at Bridewell, and both end happily. The second part, supposed to occur years later, might be thought an inferior sequel, if the introduction of a new figure, Bellafront's father, did not do for it what the introduction of Justice Shallow does for the second part of *Henry IV*. The character and shop of Candido, the linen-draper, are as good London realism as the shop and character of Simon Eyre in *The Shoemakers' Holiday*; and Candido's well known speech at the end of Part I of *The Honest Whore* is quintessential Dekker. A dramatist's personality is often miniaturized in his treatment of the virtue he most esteems. For Marlowe this virtue was intelligence, for Shakespeare mercy, for Chapman justice. For Dekker, who was in and out of debtor's prison all his life, the great virtue is the one of which Candido speaks:

Patience, my lord! why, 'tis the soul of peace;  
Of all the virtues, 'tis nearest kin to Heaven.  
It makes men look like gods. The best of men  
That e'er wore earth about him, was a sufferer,  
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,  
The first true gentleman that ever breathed.

<sup>5</sup> *Poetaster*, III. iv. 320 f.

<sup>6</sup> See later in this chapter.

<sup>7</sup> See C. J. Sisson, *Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age* (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 80-124.

<sup>8</sup> See G. F. Reynolds, "Aims of a Popular Elizabethan Dramatist," *PQ*, xx (1941), 340-344.

Dekker spent all his life in London. No Londoner was ever more like Charles Lamb, and Lamb, of course, has known how to praise him.<sup>9</sup> But there is a peculiarity about Dekker's London realism, when compared with Jonson's or Middleton's, which suggests a query. The name Dekker, or in Henslowe's spelling Dickens and Deckers, seems hardly English and may be Dutch, and there may be a connection between the dramatist and Father John Dekkers (1560-1619), who was born at Hazebrouck in Flanders and educated at Douai, where he met the martyr poet, Robert Southwell, whose life he later wrote in Latin.<sup>10</sup> However this be, there is something in Dekker's inveterate interest in dialect, Irish, Welsh, French, Spanish, thieves' Latin, and particularly Dutch, which may reflect a foreign background, and his pictures of London are unique in their longer focus. Such scenes as the best, for instance, in *The Shoemakers' Holiday*—early morning in Tower street (II. iii), Eyre's election to the shrievalty (III. iv), the party at Old Ford (III. v), Jane in the sempster's shop (IV. i), Firk outwitting Otley and Lincoln (IV. v), the "stir" outside St. Faith's (V. ii), and the pancake feast at Leadenhall (V. iv)—are as admirable in their special functions as those of Dekker's competitors; but Dekker's scenes have a general value also as picturing aspects of London life through the ages. His eye, as a partly foreign eye often does, sees the continuing characteristics, where the strictly native observer is concerned with the affairs of the moment. A reader of Dekker will be reminded of Chaucer and Dickens almost as often as of Jonson and Middleton, and this is a tribute to his selective art.

*The Quality  
of His  
Realism*

With Dekker and Shakespeare, Thomas Heywood<sup>11</sup> (c. 1570-1641) is one of the three main props of the bridge by which the drama of Marlowe communicates with that of Jonson. He was proverbially productive and refers in one of his prefaces to 220 plays in which he had "either an entire hand or at the least a main finger."<sup>12</sup> About ten per cent of this number survive, though by no effort of Heywood, who takes pride in the fact that his plays "are not exposed unto the world in volumes, to bear the title of works,"<sup>13</sup> and elsewhere<sup>14</sup> declares, "It hath been no custom in me of all other men . . . to commit my plays to the press." He remained faithful to

*Thomas  
Heywood*

<sup>9</sup> In *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets* (1808).

<sup>10</sup> *Catholic Record Society*, v (1908). 294. This might explain Dekker's indictment as a recusant in 1626 (see F. P. Wilson, "Three Notes on Thomas Dekker," *MLR*, xv (1920). 82-85). Though his allegorized drama on Queen Elizabeth, *The Whore of Babylon* (1607), might argue against his being a Catholic, he was certainly not a Puritan or an unbeliever.

<sup>11</sup> R. H. Shepherd, *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood* (6v, 1874); five plays are reprinted in the Mermaid Series with introduction by J. A. Symonds. Consult A. M. Clark, *A Bibliography of Thomas Heywood* (Oxford, 1927); S. A. Tannenbaum, *T. Heywood: A Concise Bibliography* (1939); A. M. Clark, *Thomas Heywood, Playwright and Miscellanist* (Oxford, 1931); Otelia Cromwell, *Thomas Heywood, a Study in the Elizabethan Drama of Everyday Life* (New Haven, 1928).

<sup>12</sup> *The English Traveller*. The following anonymous plays have in recent times been suggested as additions to the Heywood canon: *How a Man May Choose a Good Wife from a Bad*, 1602 (see J. Q. Adams, *ES*, xlv (1912). 30-44); *No-body and Some-body*, 1606; *The Fair Maid of the Exchange*, 1607 (see L. A. Hibbard, *MP*, vii (1909). 383-394; P. Aronstein, *ES*, xlv (1912). 45-60); *A Warning for Fair Women*, 1599 (see J. Q. Adams, *PMLA*, xxviii (1913). 594-620); *Captain Thomas Stukeley*, 1605 (see J. Q. Adams, *JEGP*, xv (1916). 1-23).

<sup>13</sup> *The English Traveller*, Preface.

<sup>14</sup> *The Rape of Lucrece*, Preface.

Heywood's  
Plays Classi-  
fied

The Four  
Ages

the acting company of which he was a member, for which he wrote most of his dramas, and beyond which he seems to have desired no fame. This company, known as the Earl of Worcester's, and after James's accession as the Queen's, was the least distinguished of the three that regularly performed in London, and had a rather low-class clientele. Heywood, a gentleman of a good Lincolnshire family<sup>15</sup> and a graduate of Cambridge, devoted himself very honorably to giving his audience what it needed. He is seldom highly poetic, as Dekker is, but seldom writes beneath his subject. In a very high degree he is clear and emotionally sound. He did not aim at being readable, but is; and his plays well justify the Horatian motto which often appeared on their title-pages, *Aut prodesse solent, aut delectare*.<sup>16</sup> They are seldom strict tragedies or strict comedies, and few of them meet the definition of tragicomedy. They tend to be slices of life and cross-sections of history. Four types may perhaps be distinguished:

(a) Classical plays. "The Four Ages" is a panorama of Greek myth, organized into five plays, the *Golden Age*, *Silver Age*, *Brazen Age*, and two parts of the *Iron Age*. In the first three Homer appears as introducer, but the chief source is Caxton's *Troy Book* in the edition of 1596, which offered a corpus of the legends, from the earliest tales of the gods (*Golden Age*) to the stories of the fates of the warriors who had fought at Troy (2 *Iron Age*).<sup>17</sup> Heywood dramatizes this mass with vigor and variety, in many forms of verse, sometimes imitating Marlowe and Shakespeare, sometimes satisfying himself with merely workmanlike dialogue. The relation between the first part of the *Iron Age* and *Troilus and Cressida* is very interesting, particularly in the character of Thersites; and in the last act of the second part there is a situation clearly borrowed from *Hamlet* (III. iv), where Agamemnon's ghost appears to Orestes while invisible to the latter's mother. Heywood's purpose in these plays, as he stated it, was

to unlock the casket long time shut,  
Of which none but the learned keep the key,<sup>18</sup>

and he reminds his readers that "these were the plays often (and not with the least applause) publicly acted by two companies upon one stage at once."<sup>19</sup> Dr. Adams<sup>20</sup> has interpreted these words to mean that Shakespeare's company coöperated with Heywood's in "a philanthropic attempt to popularize Greek culture among the middle classes of London"; and it is likely enough, for the friendly relations of the two dramatists are well established, and the presentation of the "Four Ages" would have strained the resources of Heywood's troupe.

<sup>15</sup> See K. L. Bates, "A Conjecture as to Thomas Heywood's Family," *JEGP*, XII (1913). 1-17.

<sup>16</sup> *Ars poetica*, line 333: "Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae."

<sup>17</sup> See J. S. P. Tatlock, "The Siege of Troy in Elizabethan Literature, especially in Shakespeare and Heywood," *PMLA*, xxx (1915). 673-770; R. G. Martin, "Notes on Thomas Heywood's *Ages*," *MLN*, xxxiii (1918). 23-29.

<sup>18</sup> Prologue to *The Silver Age*.

<sup>19</sup> Preface to *The Iron Age*, Part One. "Not with the least applause" means with very considerable applause.

<sup>20</sup> J. Q. Adams, "Shakespeare, Heywood, and the Classics," *MLN*, xxxiv (1919). 336-339.

Early Roman history out of Livy is treated in similar manner in Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece* (1608). The title was nearly inevitable in view of the popularity of Shakespeare's poem, but the story of Lucrece is only one in a series of episodes, beginning with the usurpation of Tarquin the Proud and murder of Servius, and running through the exploits of Horatius at the bridge and of Mutius Scaevola, to close with the deaths of Sextus Tarquin and Brutus in single combat and the establishment of the Roman republic. Lucrece is not very sympathetically portrayed, the author's chief interest being in the patriot Brutus and his amusing co-conspirator Valerius, whose highly anachronistic songs did most to account for the play's great success. These songs are nearly as numerous, varied, and excellent as those in *The Beggar's Opera*, and if added to the ones Heywood wrote for the "Four Ages" would make a remarkable anthology. In *Appius and Virginia* (printed in 1654 as by Webster alone)<sup>21</sup> we have probably another example of Heywood's desire to make Livy palatable on the stage. In *The Captives*<sup>22</sup> (c. 1624) he has tried his hand at modernizing a comedy of Plautus, the *Rudens*. This, of course, was something that Chapman and Jonson had already done with all the prestige of their learning; but Heywood's is no humor play or satire. It romanticizes the theme simply, and in so far as it resembles those other writers resembles Jonson in his very early *Case Is Altered*.

Heywood's  
Roman  
Plays

(b) English history.<sup>23</sup> The two parts of *King Edward the Fourth* (1599), published in six editions without Heywood's name, are, though early, good examples of his method, and they explain well what Lamb meant in calling him a "prose Shakespeare." The material covered overlaps that of Shakespeare's *Richard III* to a considerable extent and many of the same characters appear; but where the latter fixes upon the melodramatic and tragic aspects of history, Heywood's genial plays give us the bourgeois and episodic elements in the same life. It is a tribute to the untrammelled Elizabethan art that the same sources could be so effectively employed in such different directions. Heywood's two plays on Queen Elizabeth, which he labeled *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* (1605), have the same homely quality. The first part,<sup>24</sup> based very closely on Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, is a sentimental record of Elizabeth's dangers and privations during Mary's reign. The second part does what Heywood dearly loves to do: it pictures, by means of a large group of bourgeois or humble characters, the day-by-day life of England in the great queen's reign. A much later play, *Dick of*

Heywood's  
Treatment  
of English  
History

<sup>21</sup> Against the prevailing view that this play is mainly Heywood's, see H. D. Sykes, "Webster's *Appius and Virginia*," in *Sidelights on Elizabethan Drama* (1924), pp. 108-139; and on the other side A. M. Clark, "The Authorship of *Appius and Virginia*," *MLR*, xvi (1921), 1-17.

<sup>22</sup> Ed. A. C. Judson (New Haven, 1921). See A. H. Gilbert, "Thomas Heywood's Debt to Plautus," *JEGP*, xii (1913), 593-611.

<sup>23</sup> See L. B. Wright, "Heywood and the Popularizing of History," *MLN*, XLIII (1928), 287-293, and *Middle-class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill, 1935), pp. 603-654.

<sup>24</sup> See Mary I. Fry, "The Troubles of Queene Elizabeth," *Huntington Library Bull.*, no. 2 (1931), pp. 172-176; and G. N. Giordano-Orsini, "Thomas Heywood's Play on *The Troubles of Queen Elizabeth*," *Library*, xv (1933), 313-338.



Heywood's  
Dramatic  
Romances

*Devonshire*,<sup>25</sup> follows in more romantic fashion the exploits of Richard Peeke of Tavistock as recorded in his *Three to One* (1626).

(c) Romances. Recent English history lends a stiffening also to the two parts of the *Fair Maid of the West*, first printed in 1631 but acted much earlier, and to *Fortune by Land and Sea* by Heywood and William Rowley (not printed till 1655). They are among Heywood's most attractive works. Basing one on Essex's "Island Voyage," which started from Plymouth in 1597, and the other on the capture of the pirates Purser and Clinton in 1583, he contrives in each case a tissue of wild adventure involving excellently handled sea-fights, duels, Moroccan kings, tavern bullies, and hard-souled villains, all leading to happy conclusions and the greater glory of his heroines, Bess Bridges and Anne Harding, who, though wholly unreal, are among the most charming women of minor Elizabethan drama. *The Four Prentices of London*, one of Heywood's earliest plays, though not printed till 1615, is a mere foretaste of this style, the use of history being blatantly absurd, and the only purpose of the play that which it achieved, of flattering the lighter-brained members of the livery companies. There is as much romance and more dignity in two pleasant later plays, *A Challenge for Beauty* (1636) and *The Royal King and Loyal Subject* (1637). Each has the distinct double plot that Heywood loved and the fundamental assumption of the superiority of Englishmen in honor, valor, and generosity. The heroine of the *Challenge* resembles Shakespeare's Imogen in situation and somewhat in character; the Lady Mary Audley, the loyal true-love in the less conspicuous plot of the *Royal King*, is another of Heywood's memorable women. In *A Maidenhead Well Lost* (1634) Heywood uses a title that might suggest Middleton for a play as innocent (almost) as *Cinderella*, and nearly as full of the fairy-tale atmosphere. The last words of the foiled Iago of this not very powerful piece are:

Who would strive  
To be a villain, when the good thus thrive!

Heywood's  
Realism

(d) Bourgeois realism. Most of the plays in the two preceding groups contain scenes of literal realism which give ballast and humanity to Heywood's high-flying romance. His best plays are those in which he most restricts himself to the local scene. The cleverest, though in some ways the most uncharacteristic, is *The Wise-Woman of Hogsdon* (1638), which limits its action to London and its theme to the inconstancy of young men. Nothing more effective could well be found than the gambling scene with which this play opens or the intricate and exciting dénouement with which it closes. The whole comedy, indeed, which is mainly in prose, is superbly plotted; but, without being at all bitter, it lacks the heart interest one expects in Heywood.

<sup>25</sup> First printed in Bullen's *Collection of Old English Plays*, vol. II (1883). See J. B. Rowe, "Richard Peeke of Tavistock, his *Three to One*," *Devon Notes and Queries*, III, Part 2 (Exeter, 1905).

The fact is, Heywood's heart was no more than Shakespeare's in London, and his best play is an earlier one, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, which he set in the grim land that the balladists knew as "the north countree," and shaped more tragically than was his wont. Since Henslowe's final payment for it was made on March 6, 1603, it may rank as the last great play of Queen Elizabeth's reign. It came three years after Dekker's *Shoemakers' Holiday* and a year and a half before *Othello*, with both of which it has interesting relationships. The three works illustrate the best that was being offered to the public by the three chief dramatic companies of the day. The double-barreled plot of the *Woman Killed with Kindness* is based on three stories in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*,<sup>26</sup> but essential unity and importance are achieved by the authenticity of the realism. One will hardly find in any play more data about the amusements of an Elizabethan country household, the dancing, hunting, hawking, cards, etc.; nor a more exact picture of the evils of that life, the unbridled passions, wild extravagance, the heartless usurers, harsh laws and prisons, and the dangers of casual travel. From all this emerge the characters of Frankford, the perfect gentleman, and Susan Mountford, the ideal sister, and the almost incomparable rustic servants. Heywood's heart was certainly in this play, dealing more than any of his others with the virtue of loyalty, which for him was what Spenser called chastity,

That highest virtue, far above the rest.

He illustrated it in his life and in many of his writings, but *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is a perfect symphony on loyalty in the various relations of husband and wife, sister and brother, host and guest, master and servant.<sup>27</sup>

In a later and rather strangely titled play, *The English Traveller* (1633), Heywood returned to the same theme with an angrier arraignment of marital disloyalty and false friendship. The hero, young Geraldine, is almost as finely conceived as Frankford, but the erring characters are villainous hypocrites, as they had not been in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, and the secondary plot, out of Plautus's *Mostellaria*, lacks the harmony with the main theme that Heywood was usually able to provide.

John Webster<sup>28</sup> (c. 1580-1638) was no traditionalist, as Dekker and Heywood were, and cannot be grouped with them without some blurring of his uniqueness; but he cannot be classed, either, with the more typical Jacobean. He was neither a satirist, a defeatist, nor an escapist, and the tone of his greatest works allies him more closely with Shakespeare and

John  
Webster

<sup>26</sup> See R. G. Martin, "A New Source for *A Woman Killed with Kindness*," *ESQ*, XLIII (1910). 229-233.

<sup>27</sup> See H. D. Smith, "A Woman Killed with Kindness," *PMLA*, LIII (1938). 138-147. Many of the special merits of this play are found also in a later north-country drama, *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634), ascribed to Heywood and Richard Brome. See C. E. Andrews, "The Authorship of *The Late Lancashire Witches*," *MLN*, xxviii (1913). 183-166; R. G. Martin, "Is *The Late Lancashire Witches* a Revision?" *MP*, xiii (1915). 253-265.

<sup>28</sup> See F. L. Lucas, *Complete Works of John Webster* (4v, 1927); E. E. Stoll, *John Webster* (Cambridge, Mass., 1905); Rupert Brooke, *John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama* (1916).

Marlowe than with any of his more exact contemporaries. The record of his life is almost non-existent and the bibliography of his writings exceptionally obscure and fragmentary; two strange facts, since his prefaces indicate that hardly even Jonson had a serener confidence in the merits of his work, and the emphasis the publishers gave his name on title-pages is equal to that they gave to Shakespeare's. The complimentary verses which Middleton, Rowley, and Ford all wrote for *The Duchess of Malfi* are a rare tribute to great (and it would appear, broadly recognized) achievement.

Webster is first mentioned in Henslowe's Diary in 1602 as author of various plays which have now disappeared. One of them, *Lady Jane* (viz., Grey), can probably be traced in *Sir Thomas Wyatt*, printed in 1607 as by Dekker and Webster. It is a loose chronicle play, in casual verse and prose, and is most akin to the first part of Heywood's *If You Know Not Me*, which it likewise resembles in being preserved in a very faulty text.<sup>29</sup> In 1604 Webster wrote for Shakespeare's company the famous induction to Marston's *Malcontent*, which, unfortunately brief as it is, gives a priceless view of what went on during a performance at the Globe. About the same time he collaborated with Dekker again in two city comedies for the Children of Paul's, *Westward Ho!* and *Northward Ho!* The former received a notable accolade from Ben Jonson in the prologue to the oppositely-named *Eastward Ho!*

For that was good, and better cannot be.

They are lively and well-plotted pieces, both in prose and both dealing with the amorous amusements of London wives. It is naturally impossible to recognize in them the later Webster, but they do not appear to be overwhelmingly Dekker's work.<sup>30</sup> They are quite devoid of the caustic satire which was the fashion of the day, and, though the language and situations are pungent enough, the moral in both plays is the unfashionable one that the citizens' wives are a good deal better than their reputations. The loss of Webster's play of *Guise* is much to be deplored. He evidently thought well of it, bracketing it with *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi* in the dedication of his *Devil's Law-Case*. It was most likely founded on Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris* and would probably emphasize the Marlovian strain in Webster. His fame rests now almost wholly upon the two tragedies just mentioned, which are like no other plays of the period.

#### The White Devil

*The White Devil* was acted by the Queen's company (Heywood's) and printed in 1612. It concerns the rather recent case of Vittoria Accoramboni, Duchess of Bracciano, who lived from 1557 to 1585. By following the available accounts of her brief and stormy life Webster could have produced a much more plausible tragedy than the one he wrote;<sup>31</sup> but Webster is never plausible, and when he varies from his sources usually does so in order to

<sup>29</sup> See M. F. Martin, "If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody and The History of Sir Thomas Wyatt," *Library*, XIII (1932). 272-281; W. L. Halstead, "Note on the Text of . . . Sir Thomas Wyatt," *MLN*, LIX (1939). 585-589.

<sup>30</sup> See F. E. Pierce, *The Collaboration of Webster and Dekker* (1909).

<sup>31</sup> See B. Colonna, *La nipote di Sisto V: il dramma di Vittoria Accoramboni* (Milan, 1936), and Lucas's historical introduction, *Works of Webster*, I. 70-90.

emphasize the brutal irrationality of life, and thus increases his constructional difficulties. Vittoria in his play is neither white nor a devil. Her complicity in her husband's murder, though morally certain, is not avowed, and in the great scene of Act III, in which she is arraigned before Cardinal Monticelso and the embarrassed ambassadors, Webster allows her all the honors of the conflict. It is a scene that John Fletcher may be thought to have done well to copy a year or two later, when he wrote Katharine of Aragon's defense of herself before Cardinals Wolsey and Campeius.<sup>32</sup> Vittoria has a brother, Flamineo, who is one of the most bloodcurdlingly real villains in English drama, and a mother, Cornelia, who is one of its most pathetic creations, a kind of ancient Ophelia. Webster works with terror and pity, undiluted, and in copious outpourings. He employs ghosts and horrid dumbshows after the manner of the early Senecans, and has many of the grisliest stage deaths in literature. Isabella dies by kissing a poisoned picture of her husband, Camillo's neck is broken by his companions while vaulting, Brachiano is killed by a poisoned helmet (the pain driving him mad), Marcello is without warning run through the body by his brother in their mother's presence; Vittoria, Zanche, and Flamineo are all stabbed after a scene in which Flamineo has most horribly pretended to be shot with pistols. The deaths pile up so lawlessly that one is tempted to retort upon the author the last question in the play:

By what authority have you committed  
This massacre?

But between these are small and moving voices that protest and point the pity of it; for instance, the boy Giovanni's talk with his uncle (III. ii) and Cornelia's mad song (v. i),

Call for the robin redbreast and the wren,  
Since o'er shady groves they hover,  
And with leaves and flowers do cover  
The friendless bodies of unburied men.

*The Duchess of Malfi*, which was acted by Shakespeare's company about 1613 and revised a little later, is a better play because, along with as much terror, it has more pity, and so gives Webster's view of life in better balance. The plot, derived from Bandello through Painter and based on very early sixteenth-century history, has been made as absurd as possible. The duchess, contracting a marriage of love with her honest and knightly master of the household, must keep it secret from her two domineering brothers, who have planted a super-spy, Bosola, in her palace to inform them of just such matters. An average detective would do Bosola's business in a day, but in this play the obvious is never discernible. Years pass, while Bosola pries and plots. Children are born and almost grow to maturity in the way Sidney deplored, before the wicked brothers find a motive for their cruelty. The fourth act

The  
Duchess  
of Malfi

<sup>32</sup> *Henry VIII*, III. i. Fletcher's additions to Holinshed's account may be presumed to come from Webster.

is wholly devoted to the duchess's death, and may well be the greatest death scene in Elizabethan literature. The fifth act, which presents six deaths more, should be an anticlimax, but is kept aloft by Webster's mastery of the macabre.

The business of Webster's plays almost carries one back to the work of Kyd, but his strange art is far more intelligent. His style is curiously un-rhythmic, except in the songs which crash in, like the trumpets of doom, upon the cacophonies of mundane speech. His dialogue is often patched with sayings from Sidney, Montaigne, or Donne, which he had stored in his notebooks,<sup>33</sup> and he sometimes introduces formal "characters" such as he was writing for the Overbury collection.<sup>34</sup> His view of life is Elizabethan rather than Jacobean in the sharp distinction he maintains between good and bad and the straightforwardness with which he faces death and horror. He is one of the most romantic of dramatists. Life, he teaches, is a labyrinth. "Wish me good speed," says the Duchess near the beginning of her play,

For I am going into a wilderness,  
Where I shall find nor path nor friendly clue  
To be my guide.

The only constant is death, up to which he leads his characters relentlessly, and dismisses them under the glare of death's great illumination. He makes no theological assertions, but the reading of him is a kind of religious experience, and if any affinity for him must be sought among the Stuart writers, it will be found in such mystic poets as Herbert and Vaughan. Webster, too, seems constantly to be whispering,

Dear, beauteous death, the jewel of the just,  
Shining nowhere but in the dark,  
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,  
Could man outlook that mark!<sup>35</sup>

No one, however, is more like him than Shakespeare in the latter's darkest moods, and the play that most resembles Webster's two tragedies is *King Lear*. Lear says something very like "I am Duchess of Malfi still,"<sup>36</sup> and Gloster parallels Bosola's cosmic despair,

We are merely the stars' tennis-balls, struck and bandied  
Which way please them.<sup>37</sup>

Webster's most famous line,

Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she died young,

may have had its cue in *King Lear*, v. iii. 244; and perhaps only Shakespeare can bedew his horror with such appeals to simple pity as the Duchess's

<sup>33</sup> See C. Crawford, *Collectanea*, I. 20-46, II. 1-63 (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1906, 1907).

<sup>34</sup> E.g., *White Devil*, III. ii. 82-85 (ed. Lucas); *Duchess of Malfi*, I. i. 157-166.

<sup>35</sup> Henry Vaughan, "They are all gone into the world of light."

<sup>36</sup> *King Lear*, IV. vi. 110, "Ay, every inch a king!"

<sup>37</sup> See *King Lear*, IV. i. 36 f.

I pray thee, look thou giv'st my little boy  
Some syrup for his cold, and let the girl  
Say her prayers ere she sleep.

Webster's two later plays, *The Devil's Law-Case* (1623) and *A Cure for a Cuckold* (printed 1661)—the latter in unfortunate collaboration with Rowley—must be briefly dismissed; not because they are altogether inferior, but because Webster is here attempting tragicomedy and finds that medium too light for his hand. The chief figure of the *Law-Case*, Romelio, the wealthy merchant of Naples, who in one scene disguised as a Jew, is a not unworthy imitation of Marlowe's Barabas, and his mother and sister belong with Webster's greatest women. The long court scene (iv. ii), which occupies a fifth of the play, is comparable with the one in *The White Devil*, and some of Webster's most characteristic lines are in this play, as well as one of his greatest songs,

Courts adieu, and all delights,  
All bewitching appetites!  
Sweetest breath and clearest eye,  
Like perfumes, go out and die.



### III

#### Jacobean Drama: II. The Satiric Group

As the sixteenth century was closing, England found herself afflicted with a sharp seizure of class consciousness and social discontent. The great ardors and endurances of the Spanish war were now past and the piper was to pay. The distribution of wealth had got seriously out of balance; and Gloriana had been reigning forty years, which was too long for a sovereign who refused to make any concessions to the passage of time. The world looked very black to politicians, to gentlefolk of moderate means, and particularly to young people with careers to find.<sup>1</sup>

##### *The Cambridge Plays*

The spirit of the age is expressed in a burst of quarrelsome and rebellious English plays acted by students of Cambridge in temporary contravention of their habit of Latin drama.<sup>2</sup> *Club Law*,<sup>3</sup> produced at Clare Hall about 1599, is a dramatic lampoon on the mayor of Cambridge and other well-known members of the town. Fuller relates that the cruelty was increased by inviting the persons attacked, with their wives, and forcing them to sit the performance through. Town and gown relations were such that the malefactors, by collusion of the college authorities and their government patrons, escaped punishment. The play is in undistinguished prose, and the author is unknown.<sup>4</sup> It is lively, completely partisan, and of course realistic, charged with the same spirit that in London was sharpening courtiers' pens against the citizens.

##### *The "Parnassus" Group*

The *Parnassus* trilogy<sup>5</sup> (c. 1598-1602), acted in St. John's College, is more broadly critical and more ambitious in a literary way, though the short first part, *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus*, claims to have been written in "three days' study." This is mainly a verse allegory, and has lines echoing Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, first printed (so far as known) in 1598. Old Consiliadorus sends two hopeful boys, Philomusus and Studioso, to college, that is, on the pilgrimage to Parnassus. They journey over the appalling countries

<sup>1</sup> See L. C. Knights, *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (1937).

<sup>2</sup> When the great plague of 1592-3 suspended productions in London, the Cambridge authorities were asked to provide an English comedy for the Queen's amusement. They replied: "English comedies, for that we never used any, we presently have none." See G. C. Moore Smith, *College Plays Performed in the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1923); and, for a broader view, F. S. Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (Oxford, 1914).

<sup>3</sup> Ed. G. C. Moore Smith (Cambridge, 1907).

<sup>4</sup> There is an unverifiable tradition that he was George Ruggle, author of the famous Latin comedy, *Ignoramus*, performed before King James in 1615.

<sup>5</sup> See W. D. Macray, *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus, with Two Parts of the Return from Parnassus* (Oxford, 1886); W. J. Lawrence, "The Date of 'The Return from Parnassus, Part II,'" *MLR*, xiv (1919). 324. J. B. Leishman, "The Text of the Parnassus Plays," *RES*, xviii (1942). 395-412.

known as Logic, Dialectic, Rhetoric, etc., meeting various collegiate types: Madido the drunkard, Stupido the Puritan, Amoretto the lover, Ingenioso the literary man. In four years they have reached the foot of Parnassus, i.e., taken the B. A. degree.

The prologue to the second play (*I Return from Parnassus*)<sup>6</sup> informs us that the author, whose name has something to do with Cheshire, has been disciplined for the first part. Seven years have now elapsed, and the pilgrims, having attained their M. A.'s, are facing with great misgivings the necessity of entering the world. Ingenioso, who displays characteristics of Robert Greene and perhaps of Nashe, has found beggarly employment with the printers and the miserly patrons of poetry; Luxurioso falls heir to the trade of the "great-nosed balladmaker," William Elderton, lately deceased (c. 1592); Philomusus and Studioso, leaving debts behind them in the Cambridge shops, labor for a while as sexton and male-governess respectively, but are soon dismissed from even those low posts. Consiliadorus points the moral:

Henceforth let none be sent by careful sires,  
Nor sons nor kindred, to Parnassus hill,  
Since wayward fortune thus rewards our cost  
With discontent, their pains with poverty.  
Mechanic arts may smile, their followers laugh,  
But liberal arts bewail their destiny.

The end is angry despair, and an ironic appeal to the whole body of the university,

Whatever scholars discontented be,  
Let none but them give us a *Plaudite!*

In the third play, subtitled *The Scourge of Simony*, they are in London, saying, "Fain would I have a living, if I could tell how to come by it;" to which ironic Echo replies, "Buy it!" They discover that church livings are sold to illiterate boors and that scholarship has no market value. In one scene we have Ingenioso haggling with Danter, the piratical publisher of *Romeo and Juliet*, for obscene pamphlets, the only literature that will sell; while Philomusus and Studioso are driven to consider "the basest trade" and make overtures to the patronizing actors, Kempe and Burbage. The interview, however, revolts them, and at the close of this singularly bitter piece they set off for Kent to keep sheep.

Too acute interest in contemporary letters is usually a bad symptom in a university, and the contemporaneity of the literary references in these plays is excessive. In one scene Ingenioso reads from a copy of Bodenhams *Belvedere* hot from the press.<sup>7</sup> To us the scene is arousing, for he reads a list of names beginning with Edmund Spenser and ending with Kit Marlowe. The comment elicited is the only bit of warm youthful enthusiasm in the plays; but Ingenioso and his friends knew all too well that their predecessors,

<sup>6</sup> Prologue, line 11. The ascription to John Day is unlikely; see Boas, *op. cit.*, p. 332, note.

<sup>7</sup> Published late in 1600. See above, Part II, ch. I.

Greene, Marlowe, Nashe, and the rest, had left their bones on the shoals against which they were being driven. Even Spenser, who had the highest abilities and the brightest prospects, had now just died—as gossips said, for lack of bread.

Chapman  
and Jonson

George Chapman<sup>8</sup> (1559-1634) was some five years older than Shakespeare and Marlowe, and had been the personal friend of the latter, whose *Hero and Leander* he continued in his own very different fashion. Yet he did not publicly appear as a poet till 1594 or as a playwright till 1596. His initiation in drama came by writing for the Admiral's company under the direction of that illiterate apostle of quick returns, Philip Henslowe, and Chapman was thus brought into contact with Jonson, who was likewise in Henslowe's employ. It is not now possible to say which was the directing influence, though Chapman was the elder by over a dozen years; but it is certain that the ideas mutually struck out by these two abnormally learned and ethical minds gave great effect to a change the times were calling for. Chapman and Jonson recognized that the chronicle and romantic types of drama were passé, and they set out together to make the theatre more realistic while making it more classic.

Chapman's  
Comedies

Chapman's first surviving comedy, *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*, produced at the Rose in February, 1596, was phenomenally popular. There is a great deal of Marlowe in this flippant but amusing play. The hero is a conquering Tamburlaine, "yet but a shepherd's son at Memphis born." He is also a great lover like Faustus, and a master of craft and multiple disguise like the Jew of Malta. There are some quite lovely Marlovian echoes, and also some lines of rank burlesque, like

The Blind  
Beggar of  
Alexandria

And stern Bebritius of Bebritia.

The public evidently delighted in the lively mixture of moods and the complete cynicism with which the women are handled. The text has probably been a good deal corrupted, but at its best the *Blind Beggar* cannot have been much more than a clever skit, an overture to the new fashion.<sup>9</sup>

A Humorous  
Day's  
Mirth

Early in the next year Chapman's *Comedy of Humors* was produced.<sup>10</sup> Here, some fifteen months before Jonson's more famous comedy, one finds the "humor" theory in considerable development. The action takes place between morning and evening of a single day at the French court, which always had a peculiar interest for Chapman. Lemot, "minion" of the king, has the humor of Jonson's Knowell and Wellbred for collecting and exhibiting gulls. He devises the situations which bring the Puritan lady, the old man with the young wife, the old woman with the young husband, the father suspicious of his young daughter, the wealthy fop, and ultimately even

<sup>8</sup> See *Chapman's Comedies*, ed. T. M. Parrott (1914); A. C. Swinburne, *George Chapman, a Critical Essay* (1875); A. H. Bullen, *Elizabethans* (1924), pp. 49-69; S. A. Tannenbaum, *George Chapman: A Concise Bibliography* (1938).

<sup>9</sup> The popularity of Chapman's *Blind Beggar* produced other disguise plays; e.g., the anonymous *Look about You*, printed 1600, "as it was lately played by" the Admiral's company; and *The Blind Beggar of Bednall Green*, by Chettle and Day (1600).

<sup>10</sup> Printed in 1599 under the title, *An Humorous Day's Mirth*.

the King and Queen of France, in great excitement to Verone's ordinary or inn, whence, we are to suppose, all depart more wise, and with no harm done. As in *Every Man in His Humor*, there is just a trace of true romance in the love of Martia and the melancholy and poetic Lord Dowsecer. Chapman had great dramatic gifts, apart from his superlative intellectual and poetic equipment; but he was not a very good playwright, as compared with Jonson, because he did not stop to develop the new veins he opened. He seems to have been more interested in showing what the drama could do than in doing it, and in this he reflects the restlessness of the age. His next comedy, *All Fools*, acted at the Rose in 1599 and later at Blackfriars, shows how Terentian plots should be adapted to the modern stage. The intriguing slave has been elevated into a gentleman, Rinaldo, who stands rather outside of the action and, like Lemot, controls the movements of the rest. There is little use of the humor idea. Indeed, the stress is almost wholly on plot, which is so very intricate that a reader finds it hard to follow, though intelligent actors could make it exceedingly diverting.

*All Fools*

At this point Chapman found it possible to transfer his plays from the Admiral's company to the boy company of the Children of the Chapel, which opened at Blackfriars in 1600, and for which he wrote all his remaining comedies and most of his tragedies. Doubtless he was attracted by their patrician audience, fashionable and receptive of new ideas; but it is to be remembered in behalf of Chapman and the other dramatists who wrote habitually for the boy companies that service with them had also its drawbacks. The boys could memorize anything and could often get safely by with innovations and innuendoes which would have endangered the public players; but they could not be trusted for deeply emotional effects. Therefore, when one finds *Sir Giles Goosecap*,<sup>11</sup> which was probably his first play at Blackfriars, rather thin, this may indicate a falling off in dramatic *élan*, or may merely mean the exercise of good judgment.<sup>12</sup> The main story is that of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*,<sup>13</sup> denuded of passion and candor and transferred to Elizabethan polite society. There is much charming verse in this part of the play, and the poet-lover, Clarence, talks a good deal like Chapman himself. The title comes from the name of one of the numerous humor characters that enlarge the piece. Some especially personal matter relating to the drunken Lady Furnifall appears to have been excised in the printed edition.

*May-day*, which like *Sir Giles Goosecap* may have been written in 1602, is an exercise in modern Italian comedy, doing for the *Alessandro* of A. Piccolomini (c. 1545) more or less what *All Fools* had done for Terence's *Heautontimorumenos*. It is brisk, gay, and inoffensive. The next two plays, *The Gentleman-Usher* (c. 1603) and *Monsieur d'Olive* (c. 1604), are perhaps Chapman's most attractive comedies. Each takes its name from an elaborate

<sup>11</sup> Printed in 1606 without Chapman's name, but certainly by him.

<sup>12</sup> Professor Parrott (*op. cit.*, p. 893) suggests that here Chapman was making a special effort to imitate Jonson.

<sup>13</sup> See G. L. Kittredge, "Notes on Elizabethan Plays," *JEGP*, II (1898). 10-13.

The Gentle-  
man-Usher  
and  
Monsieur  
d'Olive

humor character. Bassiolo, the gentleman-usher, is indeed an important instrument in the romantic main-plot of the earlier play, but d'Olive, a satire on the new ambassadors King James was sending abroad, is almost unrelated to the serious action. These two plays illustrate the lack of integration of which Chapman is often guilty. In *The Gentleman-Usher* the interest hardly begins till the third act, after which it builds up in a melodramatic manner. In *Monsieur d'Olive*, on the other hand, the opening acts are brilliant in vigor and economy, though they deal with Platonic love and other amorous exaltations *à la française*, but the action seems to run down in Act iv, and Act v has the effect of a gratuitous addition in another key.

The  
Widow's  
Tears

There could hardly be a greater contrast, within the work of a single comic writer and within a couple of years at most, than that between *Monsieur d'Olive* and Chapman's next and last comedy, *The Widow's Tears* (c. 1605).<sup>14</sup> *D'Olive* is remarkable for the pleasant people it presents. The ladies and gentlemen of the main plot are without exception high-minded and engaging; and d'Olive himself, though satirical in intention and genuinely comic, has a Falstaffian robustness that endears him and a harmlessness that is by no means Falstaff's. There are really no pleasant people in *The Widow's Tears*, and the story, that of the Ephesian widow in Petronius, is one of the most cynical in literature. "Bitter" was one of the most popular adjectives of the day; Chapman's characters are fond of throwing it at each other, even in plays which are not bitter. In *The Widow's Tears*—moved by a desire to be in fashion, or by some special disgust with widows, or merely by his propensity to try new things—Chapman has written a play that is entirely bitter. Its tone has been fairly likened to Wycherley's, for the light misogyny of *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* is here developed past joking. The women are whited sepulchres, and the men are interesting only as the means or discoverers of their lust. The drama is powerfully plotted, and Tharsalio, the intriguer, who here has a large personal interest in the action he contrives, is a character of great force. One must admire the art by which the entire play, harsh as it is, is kept within the true bounds of comedy. It is contemporary with Chapman's earliest tragedies, but it makes no appeal to pity or fear, and is quite without either tragic or tragicomic elements.

Chapman's  
Tragedies

*Bussy d'Ambois*,<sup>15</sup> published in 1607 as acted by the Paul's children, is *Tamburlaine* twenty years after. The very first speech, a soliloquy by the hero, contains one of the finest of the great Homeric similes with which Chapman weights his tragedies, and the moral of it is,

We must to Virtue for her guide resort,  
Or we shall shipwreck in our safest port.

It is the same Virtue in which *Tamburlaine* had seen the sum of glory, which fashions men with true nobility. Boundless self-confidence and self-assertiveness are its marks, and in these things Bussy resembles *Tamburlaine*, as well

<sup>14</sup> Chapman's joint-work, with Jonson and Marston, in *Eastward Ho!* probably intervened.

<sup>15</sup> See C. E. Engel, "Les sources du Bussy d'Amboise de Chapman," *RLC*, xii (1932). 587-595; R. G. Howarth, "The Date of *Bussy d'Ambois*," *N&Q*, CLXXVII (1939). 25.

as in the great poetic energy of his speeches. The greatest difference between the two plays is in the constrictedness of the latter. Tamburlaine was a vague and heroic world-conqueror, Bussy a recent French soldier of fortune of no very special achievement, born ten years before Chapman and murdered at the age of thirty. While Tamburlaine scourges kingdoms with his conquering sword, Bussy domineers over a peculiarly ignoble group of courtiers and is assassinated by the husband of the lady he has seduced. The earth-shaking vaunts of *Tamburlaine* and occult agencies of *Dr. Faustus* often seem absurd in *Bussy*; but Chapman strengthens his play by Senecan devices such as the wonderful use of the *nuntius* in II. i, and by large draughts of Stoic philosophy. He also borrows some hints from the comedy of humors. Bussy, Monsieur, and Guise are in some respects humor characters; and some of the early scenes, e.g., the talk between Bussy and Maffé (I. i) and Bussy's introduction to the court (I. ii), are more like comedy than tragedy. Altogether, *Bussy d'Ambois* is a successful transfer of Elizabethan romanticism into the lower key and narrower range of the new age. It was very popular and its vogue lasted well into the Restoration period. Historically, it is significant as marking a half-way stage between the heroic drama of Marlowe and the heroic, "love-and-honor" drama of Dryden.

Chapman's tragedies<sup>16</sup> are all studies of political decay, swan-songs of Renaissance individualism. They all deal, like the fifth book of the *Faerie Queene*, with a world that Astraea, the goddess of justice, has abandoned; and five of the six get their material from France, which in the later sixteenth century was par excellence the country of civil strife and eccentric personalities. In the two parts of *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron* (1608) Chapman deals with an even more recent figure than Bussy d'Ambois, and a much more important one. Hardly any Frenchman except Henry of Navarre was better known in England than the Duke of Biron (1562-1602), and Chapman's double-tragedy, based closely upon an English book that had just appeared (Edward Grimestone's *General Inventory of the History of France*, 1607), concentrates on these two figures. Henry is very sympathetically presented, but his ambassador in London naturally objected to some of the realism, and both parts have been badly curtailed. Byron is, like Tamburlaine and Bussy, an aspiring giant, but aspiration is no longer the law of nature; it is a fatal sin against the classic concept of the balanced personality. There is some grand poetry in *Byron*; for example, the hero's famous apostrophe in the viking mood:<sup>17</sup>

Give me a spirit that on this life's rough sea  
Loves t' have his sails fill'd with a lusty wind,  
Even till his sail-yards tremble, his masts crack,

<sup>16</sup> *Chapman's Tragedies*, ed. T. M. Parrott (1910). See A. S. Ferguson, "The Plays of George Chapman," *MLR*, XIII (1918), 1-24; xv (1920), 223-239; J. Spens, "Chapman's Ethical Thought," *E&S*, XI (1925), 145-169; H. Craig, "Ethics in the Jacobean Drama: the Case of Chapman," and C. W. Kennedy, "Political Theory in the Plays of George Chapman," in *Parrott Presentation Volume* (1935), pp. 25-46, 73-86.

<sup>17</sup> *Byron's Conspiracy*, III. iii. 135 ff.



And his rapt ship run on her side so low  
That she drinks water, and her keel plows air.  
There is no danger to a man that knows  
What life and death is . . .

and it develops more clearly than any of Chapman's other plays the idea Shakespeare is so fond of, overthrow of an essentially noble character by a fault which is complementary to its virtue.

The  
Revenge  
of Bussy

*The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, written after the Byron plays and first printed in 1613, is less a sequel to the original *Bussy* than a development of the political philosophy of *Byron*. The hero, Bussy's brother and avenger, Clermont d'Ambois, is an entirely fictitious figure invented by Chapman as an example of the Stoic or "Senecal man," adequate to every situation and armed against all the chances of life.

Come fair or foul, whatever chance can fall,  
Fix'd in himself, he still is one to all.

This is the ideal type Chapman, and Jonson too, set up in reprobation of the vain and unbalanced humor figures they found their world producing.<sup>18</sup>

Chabot

*The Tragedy of Chabot Admiral of France*, first printed in 1639 as by Chapman and Shirley,<sup>19</sup> and based on an episode at the court of Francis I (c. 1540), has been interestingly interpreted as a political parable applicable to the English court of James I about 1615-21.<sup>20</sup> By this reading, Chabot, the king's noble servant who is injured by calumny, is the disgraced favorite Somerset, and the vindictive Lord Chancellor is Francis Bacon. Chapman's sympathy with Somerset is certain, and the parallelism of figures and events is undoubtedly striking. Such a purpose may account for the sentimental strain in the play, which deals, like *Byron*, with the relation of king and subject, and, like the *Revenge of Bussy*, with the ideals of ethical justice. In *The Tragedy of Caesar and Pompey*, printed 1631, Chapman undisguisedly upholds the thesis that "only a just man is a free man." Setting out to show the righteousness of the Stoic Cato in contrast with the ambition of Caesar and of Pompey, he becomes sympathetic with both the others and makes all three mouthpieces of Stoic doctrine. Despite the title, however, Cato is the hero, the Senecal man courageous enough not to seek his ends by violence; and the scenes dealing with Cato's death make an interesting comparison with Addison's *Cato*.

Caesar and  
Pompey

Ben Jonson<sup>21</sup> (1572-1637) entered the English theatre like a scourge and

<sup>18</sup> See R. H. Perkinson, "Nature and the Tragic Hero in Chapman's Bussy Plays," *MLQ*, III (1942). 263-285.

<sup>19</sup> Shirley's part probably consists in alterations and additions not germane to the original work.

<sup>20</sup> See N. D. Solve, *Stuart Politics in Chapman's Tragedy of Chabot* (Ann Arbor, 1928).

<sup>21</sup> The standard edition is that of C. H. Herford and P. and E. Simpson (7v, Oxford, 1925, in progress), superseding the Gifford-Cunningham edition (9v, 1875). See S. A. Tannenbaum, *Ben Jonson: A Concise Bibliography* (1938); J. F. Bradley and J. Q. Adams, *The Jonson Allusion Book, 1597-1700* (New Haven, 1922), and G. E. Bentley, *Shakespeare and Jonson: Their Reputations in the Seventeenth Century Compared* (2v, Chicago, 1945); M. Castelain, *Ben Jonson, l'homme et l'œuvre* (Paris, 1907); C. R. Baskerville, *English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedy*

for some time was regarded as an affliction. The first play with which his name can be connected is a lost comedy, *The Isle of Dogs* (1597), in which he collaborated with Nashe. Its satire so incensed the authorities that they commanded the closing of all playhouses, and imprisoned Jonson and two of the other actors in the Marshalsea.<sup>22</sup> At this time Ben was both actor and playwright,<sup>23</sup> and he seems to have disposed of his works as best he could among the different companies. *The Isle of Dogs* was not produced at Henslowe's theatre, but Henslowe was enough his friend to lend him £4 toward the cost of imprisonment, and on the following December 3 advanced him twenty shillings on the plot of a play he was to finish by Christmas. Jonson failed to complete the assignment, and a year later Chapman was being paid for work on a tragedy of "Benjamin's plot."

By 1598 Jonson had written *The Case Is Altered* for the Chapel Children, a comedy comparable with Chapman's *All Fools*, though more romantic in tone and less expertly worked out. He takes Plautus for his model, where Chapman used Terence, and similarly develops the classic themes into a comedy of modern Italy. To this early period may also belong the original form of *A Tale of a Tub*, which exists only as Jonson revised it much later. His fame began with the first play by him that the Chamberlain's company acted, *Every Man in His Humor*. Tradition, reported by Rowe in 1709, states that Shakespeare's personal intervention induced the company to accept this play. Certainly Shakespeare acted a part in it when it was produced, about September, 1598, and it quickly became one of the great successes of the day. As the text then stood, it was superficially another Italian comedy, set in Florence and concerned with the classic devices of the duel of wits between father and son and the stratagems of an intriguing slave; but behind this there was a keen analysis of contemporary English society which came more sharply into focus when Jonson revised the play for his Folio of 1616, giving the characters English names and introducing a vast apparatus of pungent London allusion. Essentially, it is the arraignment of an era bent on acquiring fashionable prestige at small cost. The absurd quest of gentlemanliness is lashed in a diversity of one-track "humor" characters. The country cousin, Stephen, thinks he can rate as a gentleman by studying a book about hawking, and the city youth, Matthew, seeks the same end by pretending to be a poet. The coward Bobadill wins temporary respect by boasts about his fencing, and by the elegance with which he swears and takes tobacco. The most intelligent of the young men, Knowell and Wellbred, make an avocation of exploiting the fools they meet for the gratification of their own vanity. The public, sick of the insincerities of the time, welcomed Jonson's

Ben  
Jonson

Every Man  
in His  
Humor

(Austin, 1911); Elisabeth Woodbridge, *Studies in Jonson's Comedy* (1898); Esther C. Dunn, *Ben Jonson's Art* (Northampton, Mass., 1925). The best recent biographies, in addition to the account in Herford-Simpson, are G. Gregory Smith, *Ben Jonson* (EML Series, 1919); Eric Linklater, *Ben Jonson and King James* (1931); John Palmer, *Ben Jonson* (1934). Copiously annotated texts of the various plays are available in the *Yale Studies in English* (general editor A. S. Cook, 14v, 1903-1926).

<sup>22</sup> Jonson's imprisonment lasted from July till October, 1597.

<sup>23</sup> See F. T. Bowers, "Ben Jonson the Actor," *SP*, xxxiv (1937). 392-406.

satire with delight, and the liveliest commentator of the day, Samuel Rowlands, was soon urging all poets to follow his lead:

Good honest poets, let me crave a boon:  
That you would write, I do not care how soon,  
Against the bastard humors hourly bred  
In every mad-brain'd, wit-worn, giddy head.  
At such gross follies do not sit and wink;  
Belabor these same gulls with pen and ink! <sup>24</sup>

Every Man  
out of His  
Humor

*Every Man out of His Humor* was acted at the Globe the next year (1599), and Jonson was so proud of it that he rushed it into print in 1600 with a signed dedication to the gentlemen of the Inns of Court, the arbiters of elegance of the day. This play has been explained as an effort to employ the stage as a vehicle for the type of caustic satire which the censors of the press were prohibiting,<sup>25</sup> and certainly it belongs to the same literary movement that produced the satires of Hall and Marston; but it is probably enough to say that Jonson was so delighted with the success of his new technique in *Every Man In* that in the second play he came close to running it to death. There is nothing like a dramatic plot in *Every Man Out*; it consists of dramatic episodes and acute psychological generalizations. The characters still have Italian names, but do not live in Italy. They inhabit the "Fortunate Island," which in the obvious language of irony means England. Ten or twelve social misfits exhibit their egotistic folly through four acts, and in the fast-moving fifth each is by the logic of events kicked "out of his humor," that is, into a more normal state of mind. The printed text is prefaced by a clever list of "the characters of the persons," in which each is neatly impaled, like the insects in an entomologist's collection; and there is an inordinately heavy mass of running commentary, four persons being used to emphasize the author's views or show the wisdom of his method.

Cynthia's  
Revels

We do not know what Shakespeare thought of *Every Man out of His Humor*, but it is safe to infer that his company did not find it rewarding, for several years passed before they again acted a play by Jonson. His next, *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), was sold to the boys of the Queen's Chapel. It is a slighter piece, but even more aggressive, and in a number of respects forecasts Jonson's development.<sup>26</sup> It ends in an authentic masque, and includes the loveliest song that he yet had written: "Queen and huntress, chaste and fair." In the elaborately satiric definitions of courtier types it goes beyond *Every Man Out* and prepares for the "characters" of *Overbury* and *Earle*. It is a last dramatic tribute to the aged Queen, who, as in Lyly, is pictured in Cynthia; but through the stately grace of the allegory tramps the burly figure of the author, originally called Criticus, but in the 1616 text magnified into

<sup>24</sup> Epigram "To Poets" in *The Letting of Humor's Blood in the Head-Vein* (1600).

<sup>25</sup> See O. J. Campbell, *Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida* (San Marino, 1938), pp. 1-81.

<sup>26</sup> See E. W. Talbert, "The Classical Mythology and the Structure of *Cynthia's Revels*," *PQ*, xxii (1943), 193-210; A. H. Gilbert, "The Function of the Masques in *Cynthia's Revels*," *PQ*, xxii (1943), 211-230.

Crites, the Judge. He is the man who is always right, receives the Queen's ecstatic praise for his poetry and wisdom, and at the end writes himself Cynthia's warrant to purge society, along with his chosen companion, Arete, or Virtue:

Dear Arete and Crites, to you two  
We give the charge: impose what pains you please;  
Th' incurable cut off, the rest reform.

Such bumptiousness was intolerable, and Jonson was angrily laughed at. Even his admirer, Marston, seems to have giped at him a little in the revised anti-war play, *Histriomastix*, in *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, and elsewhere. Jonson's reply was *Poetaster* (1601), which begins with Envy hopefully rising "to damn the author," but trodden underfoot by the mailed prologue of the piece. If not one of the greatest plays, *Poetaster* is one of the most amusing. The scene is Rome in the reign of Augustus, and the chief characters are the great poets of that age, their patrons and enemies. Jonson arrogates to himself the character of Horace and belauds him plentifully, while excoriating Marston as the poetaster, Crispinus. But during the fifteen weeks that he spent in composition Jonson must have talked, and his intended victims were ready for him. Dekker's more rapid pen was enlisted, and his *Satiromastix*, or *the Untrussing of the Humorous Poet*, must have been on the stage almost as soon as *Poetaster*. One appeared at Blackfriars, the other both at the Globe and at Paul's. Jonson evidently knew of Dekker's commission in time to add him as a subsidiary poetaster (Demetrius) and to work in some diverting calumny of the Globe company in *Histrio*.<sup>27</sup> Ben himself offered a broader target for ridicule than did the poetasters, and Dekker, with no virulence, has taken good advantage of it. His play is a mine of information on Jonson as his contemporaries knew him in 1601. His slowness in composition, self-esteem, his career as bricklayer and barnstorming actor, his poverty and sycophancy to the great, his killing of a player and escape from Tyburn by his "neck-verse," his "parboiled face," that looked "for all the world like a rotten russet apple when 'tis bruised," and his habit of epigramming his friends are all set down with the precision of a master realist. The two playhouses that gave Dekker's play must have been well filled, and a printed text of *Satiromastix* was immediately in demand.

Jonson recognized the glassiness of the house he lived in, and for a time withheld his stones. In a dignified "apologetical dialogue" to *Poetaster* he withdrew from the stage war and devoted himself to classic tragedy. In this he is in amusing contrast with Dick Steele, who, having given umbrage to his army friends by the seriousness of *The Christian Hero*, turned to comedy to retrieve his popularity.<sup>28</sup> Jonson rescued himself by *Sejanus* (1603), a historical play of ponderous ethics and meticulous scholarship. It

*Poetaster*

*The War of  
the Theatres*

*Dekker's  
Satiromastix*

*Jonson's  
Roman  
Plays*

<sup>27</sup> A slightly different conjecture of the situation is given by Herford and Simpson, *op. cit.*, I. 27-29. Earlier and more elaborate discussion in J. H. Penniman, *The War of the Theatres* (1897), and R. A. Small, *The Stage-Quarrel between Jonson and the So-called Poetasters* (1899).

<sup>28</sup> See Mr. Steele's *Apology for Himself and His Writings* (1714), p. 102.

has the kind of greatness that Chapman's later tragedies have. Chapman, as well as Marston, wrote commendatory verses for the first quarto in 1605, and Chapman may indeed have had a part in composing the stage version. Shakespeare's company produced it, as they later did Jonson's other Roman tragedy of *Catiline's Conspiracy* (1611), and Shakespeare himself, now on the point of retiring as an actor, performed a part in *Sejanus*. The war of the theatres was quite over.

Volpone

Jonson's training as a comic realist served him well in *Sejanus*, which gives an impressively real view of imperial Rome and develops the great figures as enlarged and darkened humor characters. It is an important play, but most important for what it led to, for it led to *Volpone, the Fox* (1606). This magnificent if rather dreadful comedy, acted by Shakespeare's company, which had now become the King's, is supposed to take place in modern Venice; but its treatment of the theme of greed comes from Jonson's study of the enormities of ancient Rome. The character symbolism peculiar to humor comedy is here intensified by imitating the method of the beast-fable, which taught how human types could be caricatured by representing them as animals.<sup>29</sup> The chief villain is, as usual, called the fox; his agent is the fly (Mosca), and his dupes are the birds of prey, crow, vulture, and raven. The technical perfection of the plot is a little marred, but the human appeal a good deal increased, by the addition of three English types: Peregrine (the falcon), Sir Pol (the talkative parrot), and the latter's extraordinarily British and modern wife.

The Alchemist

Very good judges have thought *Volpone* the finest of Jonson's plays. Dryden gave the palm to his next production, *The Silent Woman* (1609), which verges upon farce, as *Volpone* does upon tragedy. Either of them—so wonderfully are they articulated and so amazingly lifelike—might doubtless assure Jonson's place as the greatest satiric dramatist England has produced; but they are both surpassed by his third crowning play, *The Alchemist* (1610), which in tone strikes an exact center between the other two, and which has an even more perfect economy. In *The Alchemist*, it may be said, every word and gesture counts in the final effect. The fusion of classic method and English scene is here complete and could go no further. The place is not only London; it is the fashionable Blackfriars quarter where Jonson lived, and from which he had signed the dedication of *Volpone*. Everything occurs either inside Lovewit's house or before the door. The time is during the plague of 1610, which was raging as Jonson wrote, and it is not longer than the actual time the actors are on the stage. A single spring moves all the characters, the desire to get something for nothing. Three of the twelve *dramatis personae* are knaves; seven are dupes, representing five classes of people one would expect to see at Blackfriars: the young, professional law clerk, the luxury merchant dealing in tobacco and other courtly wares, the pleasure-loving knight, the two Puritan preachers, and the wealthy young man up from the country with his sister. The remaining characters, Surly

<sup>29</sup> See H. Levin, "Jonson's Metempsychosis," *PQ*, xxii (1943). 231-239.

and Lovewit, are neither quite knave nor quite dupe, but potentially both, as the action reveals. Such was Jonson's picture of his neighbors, presented without romance and quite without poetic justice, but also without bitterness. It lacks the harshness of *Volpone* and enforces its moral with a more cleansing laughter.

Such precision could hardly be repeated without growing stale, and Jonson's later comedies are in some sense inferior. His comic art was a very jealous mistress, and from it he was more and more distracted by his famous masques which from 1610 demanded an increasing amount of his attention.<sup>30</sup> Two very important plays were, however, produced: *Bartholomew Fair* in 1614 and *The Staple of News* in 1626. The former is the complement of *The Alchemist*, a picture of the other side of London, where the lower classes congregate at Smithfield during the famous August fair. It takes a larger canvas and many more characters, but Jonson finds much the same people there and the same vices. The characterization and satiric brilliance can hardly be said to be inferior to anything he had done, but the structure is less neat. The scenes in *The Staple of News* that ridicule the impostures of the new business of journalism are equally fine. "No man," said Swinburne, not unwisely, "can know anything worth knowing of Ben Jonson who has not studied and digested the text of *Every Man in His Humor*, *The Fox*, *The Alchemist*, and *The Staple of News*; but any man who has may be said to know him well."<sup>31</sup> *The Devil Is an Ass* (1616) and *The New Inn* (1629) are on a lower plane, but they have more romantic charm than anything Jonson had written in drama since *The Case Is Altered*. As he grew older and sadder, and his classic certitude relaxed, he became in some ways more Elizabethan, and he gave best expression to this side of himself in the beautiful fragment of pastoral drama that he left uncompleted, *The Sad Shepherd*.

Jonson's  
Later Plays

John Marston<sup>32</sup> (1576-1634) has been called "a screech-owl among the singing birds."<sup>33</sup> He resembles John Donne a good deal, though scarcely in genius. The son and heir-apparent of John Marston of Coventry, Esq., who was also a distinguished lawyer of London, he was educated at Brasenose College, Oxford, and early admitted to the Middle Temple, where it was expected that he would prepare for the bar. His father's will leaves his law books "to my said son, whom I hoped would have profited by them in the study of the law, but man proposeth and God disposeth."<sup>34</sup> Like many of the young Templars, and like Ovid in Jonson's *Poetaster*, Marston preferred

John  
Marston

<sup>30</sup> Jonson's masques and entertainments are best studied in Vol. VII of the Herford-Simpson *Ben Jonson* (Oxford, 1941). For valuable discussion and many illustrations see A. Nicoll, *Stuart Masques and the Renaissance Stage* (1937).

<sup>31</sup> A. C. Swinburne, *A Study of Ben Jonson* (1889), p. 74.

<sup>32</sup> *The Plays of John Marston*, ed. H. H. Wood (3v, Edinburgh, 1934-1938); *Works*, ed. A. H. Bullen (3v, 1887). See A. C. Swinburne, *The Age of Shakespeare* (1908), pp. 112-149; T. Spencer, "John Marston," *Criterion*, XIII (1934), 581-599.

<sup>33</sup> L. Lockert, "Marston, Webster, and the Decline of the Elizabethan Drama," *Sewanee Rev.*, XXVII (1919), 62-81.

<sup>34</sup> R. E. Brettell, "John Marston, Dramatist: Some New Facts about His Life," *MLR*, XXII (1927), 7-14; "John Marston . . . at Oxford," *RES*, III (1927), 398-405.



to write flamboyant and cynical verse. He fell strongly under the influence of Jonson, with whom he quarreled, violently but briefly. Playwriting was but an episode in the career of this fashionable youth; his plays all belong to a half-dozen years at the opening of the seventeenth century. At a rather late age he turned to the church, was ordained in 1609, married the daughter of an eminent clergyman, and for most of the rest of his life held a good living in Hampshire. More than most of the genteel writers he scoffed at literary fame, and seems to have been really offended by the publication of his collected plays in 1633. When he died, the next year, he was interred in the choir of the Temple Church, and the Lancaster Herald enrolled his lineage and clerical dignity, but not his repute as a dramatist, in the Office of Arms.

Marston's  
Early Plays

Marston wrote for the fashionable class and employed only the boys' companies to give his plays—first that of Paul's and later the Queen's Revels children at Blackfriars, in which latter company he had a substantial financial investment. *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (1600) is a boisterous farce, mainly interesting today for the probable ridicule of Jonson as Brabant Sr. The next year Paul's produced a more famous pair of plays: *Antonio and Mellida* and *Antonio's Revenge*, both printed in 1602.<sup>35</sup> Marston likes the conventional Italian setting, using it in these plays and four others, but he handles it with a grim and acrid realism. Feliche, "an honest bitter courtier" in *Antonio and Mellida*, resembles Jonson's Asper in *Every Man Out*, and the play concludes with an armed epilogue jesting at the armed prologue in *Poetaster*. Marston's play is a more melodramatic *Romeo and Juliet* with a happy ending; its strangely matched sequel rather follows *Hamlet* and from start to finish is crammed with ghosts and corpses.<sup>36</sup> Much lighter fare is offered in Marston's *What You Will*, which, though not printed till 1607,<sup>37</sup> was probably composed no later than 1602. The borrowed Italian plot is here very pleasantly handled, but it is overladen with irrelevant by-action relating apparently to the war of the theatres. Quadratus and Lampatho Doria, who quarrel a good deal, may to contemporaries have seemed lively portraits of Marston and Jonson, but posterity has found it hard to equate them with their originals.

The Mal-  
content and  
The Fawn

In *The Malcontent* (1604) and *Parasitaster, or the Fawn* (1606) Marston builds his plot around the figure of an Italian duke in disguise. Malevole in the former play wins the confidence of all by vociferous and unrelenting acerbity,<sup>38</sup> while the "Fawn" attains the same end by universal geniality. Both

<sup>35</sup> Reprinted for the Malone Society (1921). See D. J. McGinn, "A New Date for *Antonio's Revenge*," *PMLA*, LIII (1938), 129-137.

<sup>36</sup> In the most important matters Marston is guided by Jonson, but no writer of the time is more full of allusions to Shakespeare's plays.

<sup>37</sup> This play was published by Thomas Thorpe, who issued Jonson's *Volpone* in the same year and Shakespeare's sonnets two years later. Thorpe, whose talent seemed to lie in securing inaccessible manuscripts, was also instrumental in publishing *The Malcontent* (1604), *Eastward Ho!* (1605), and *Histriomastix* (1610). The last is probably a revision by Marston of an earlier play.

<sup>38</sup> This very popular play set, or at least confirmed, a fashion for querulousness as a mark of aristocratic behavior. See E. E. Stoll, "Shakespeare, Marston, and the Malcontent Type," *MP*, III (1906), 281-303; "The Date of *The Malcontent*: A Rejoinder," *RES*, XI (1935), 42-50.

are intricately plotted comedies exposing the manifold follies that abound in courts. Marston dedicated *The Malcontent* to the now reconciled Jonson, and in the epilogue repeated his humble admiration of the great man

To whose desertful lamps<sup>39</sup> pleased fates impart  
Art above nature, judgment above art.

In 1605 he joined with Jonson and Chapman in producing one of the most excellent of all London comedies, *Eastward Hol*, in which Marston's pen seems to have been the most active and the wickedest.<sup>40</sup> His own *Dutch Courtesan*, likewise printed in 1605, is hardly inferior; it is a play of the most astounding high spirits, carrying knavery to the limits of laughter and the edge of tragedy. The ghoulishness that Marston often affected and the extraordinary bursts of violent language for which he was famous are conspicuous in *The Wonder of Women, or the Tragedy of Sophonisba* (1606), a play of undoubted force and fine feeling, but written, as one may suspect from the prefatory epistle and the style, to show how different a classical tragedy might be from *Sejanus*.<sup>41</sup>

The Dutch  
Courtesan

Sophonisba

Marston's most violent characteristics, as displayed in his satires and *Antonio's Revenge*, were adopted and surpassed by the mysterious Cyril Tournear<sup>42</sup> (c. 1580-1626) who first appears in 1600 as the author of a poetically expressed but obscure political parable in rime royal, *The Transformed Metamorphosis*.<sup>43</sup> His position in history depends upon two plays: *The Revenger's Tragedy*, printed in 1607 as acted by the King's company, and *The Atheist's Tragedy*, printed in 1611 "as in divers places it hath often been acted." There was but a single edition of each play, and the vague publisher's statement just quoted is the nearest thing to evidence that Tournear enjoyed any repute at all in his own time. His fame is the gift of nineteenth-century romanticism, and was erected into an article of faith by Swinburne's essay, which speaks extravagantly of Tournear's "unique and incomparable genius."<sup>44</sup> Tournear is not a satirist or a realist to the extent that Marston is, and his idea of tragedy is not much subtler than that presented in *Titus*

Cyriel  
Tournear

<sup>39</sup> With reference, probably, to Jonson's well-known consumption of midnight oil. In *What You Will* Lampatho Doria is less flatteringly called "Lamp."

<sup>40</sup> See J. Q. Adams, "Eastward Hol and Its Satire against the Scots," *SP*, xxviii (1931), 689-701; R. E. Brettell, "Eastward Hol, 1605," *Library*, ix (1928), 287-304; P. Simpson, "The Problem of Authorship of Eastward Hol," *PMLA*, lix (1944), 715-725.

<sup>41</sup> Marston also left a tragedy, *The Insatiate Countess* (printed 1613), based on stories in Painter. William Barksted seems to have had a hand in it. Marston's comedies had a close but worthless imitator in another member of the Middle Temple, Edward Sharpham (1576-1608), author of *The Fleire* (1607) and *Cupid's Whirligig* (1607).

<sup>42</sup> A. Nicoll, *The Works of Cyril Tournear* (Fanfrolico Press, 1930). See L. Lockert, "The Greatest of Elizabethan Melodramas," *Parrott Presentation Vol.* (1935), pp. 103-126; E. M. Waith, "The Ascription of Speeches in *The Revenger's Tragedy*," *MLN*, LVII (1942), 119-121.

<sup>43</sup> See K. N. Cameron, "Cyril Tournear and *The Transformed Metamorphosis*," *RES*, xvi (1940), 1-7.

<sup>44</sup> *The Age of Shakespeare* (1908), pp. 262-289. Recent efforts to ascribe *The Revenger's Tragedy* to another author seem ill warranted. See, however, E. H. C. Oliphant, "The Authorship of *The Revenger's Tragedy*," *SP*, xxiii (1926), 157-168; W. D. Dunkel (same title), *PMLA*, XLVI (1931), 781-785; U. M. Ellis-Fermor, "The Imagery of *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *The Atheist's Tragedy*," *MLR*, xxx (1935), 289-301.

Thomas  
Middleton

*Andronicus*; but he had a real gift for invective, and while exhibiting beastly figures in the perpetration of ill-motivated atrocities he was able to shroud his stage in the miasma of bitter world-weariness which was one of the symptoms of the Jacobean reaction. He is perhaps the most striking dramatist in this particular genre; but it was a low and transient type of art, and it is not strange that the earlier play, *The Revenger's Tragedy*, is more effective than its successor. This kind of thing, as *The Spanish Tragedy* also shows, is often done best when done for the first time.

Thomas Middleton <sup>45</sup> (1580-1627) is the complete Jacobean. His earliest dramatic attempts were made for Henslowe during the last year of Queen Elizabeth's life, but his known plays all fall within King James's reign (1603-1625) and fill it to the very end. He is as typical of Jacobean realism as Fletcher is of its romance. Judgment was the merit that Middleton most regarded, and the best way of describing his plays is perhaps to say that they have a spirit the Lord Chancellor Bacon would have esteemed. The author of the preface to the posthumous (1640) edition of *A Mad World, My Masters*, one of Middleton's early plays, strikes the right critical note:

Here is no bombasted or fustian stuff, but every line weighed as with a balance, and every sentence placed with judgment and deliberation.

Middleton writes in a time of dubiety, and in the text of this same play expresses the uncertainties of his actors in terms which might be generalized to fit the whole structure of society:

They were never more uncertain in their lives, now up and now down. They know not when to play, where to play, nor what to play: not when to play, for fearful fools; <sup>46</sup> where to play, for puritan fools; nor what to play, for critical fools.

He could have said as much for playwrights, and does suggest it in his preface to the excellent comedy he wrote with Dekker, *The Roaring Girl* (1611):

The fashion of play-making I can properly compare to nothing so naturally as the alteration in apparel; for in the time of the great crop-doublet your huge bombasted plays, quilted with mighty words to lean purpose, were only then in fashion; and as the doublet fell, neater inventions began to set up. Now, in the time of spruceness, our plays follow the niceness of our garments: single plots, quaint conceits, lecherous jests dressed up in hanging sleeves; and such are fit for the times and the termers.<sup>47</sup>

As might be inferred, Middleton had no clear-cut convictions about dramat-

<sup>45</sup> *Works*, ed. A. H. Bullen (8v, 1885-6). Ten plays are printed in the Mermaid Series, with introduction by A. C. Swinburne, and R. C. Bald has added an excellent edition of *Hengist, King of Kent* (1938). See M. Eccles, "Middleton's Birth and Education," *RES*, vii (1931), 431-441; R. C. Bald, "The Chronology of Middleton's Plays," *MLR*, xxxii (1937), 33-43; T. S. Eliot, *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928), pp. 100-116, revised in *Elizabethan Essays* (1934); G. Bradford, "The Women of Middleton and Webster," *Sewanee Rev.*, xxix (1921), 14-29, reprinted in *Elizabethan Women* (1936), ch. vi.

<sup>46</sup> I.e., fearful of the plague.

<sup>47</sup> See H. B. Bullock, "Thomas Middleton and the Fashion in Playmaking," *PMLA*, (1927), 766-776.

ic structure, such as Jonson and Chapman had, and no very individualized poetic style. He seems to have had no close theatrical connections either. His plays were simply performed by all the theatrical companies there were, adult or boy, good, bad, or indifferent, as chance might in each case dictate. He is altogether an ambiguous person. By birth a Londoner; by education an alumnus of Queen's College, Oxford; by descent the son of a citizen and bricklayer, who, however, bore the arms of a Westmorland family and had connections of some rank, Middleton remained a citizen, and from 1620 till his death served as City Chronologer, i.e. laureate for the Lord Mayor and corporation.<sup>48</sup> One of the things that mark him is his emphatic lack of interest in the king and court. He has no cavalier propensities. This is one of the many differences that appear when his comedy, *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1608), is compared with the play Massinger made out of it, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*. He satirizes Puritans, university men, doctors, usurers, citizens' wives, and country squires, always acutely and often obscenely. He hardly cares at all for heroes, villains, or ghosts; his interest, indeed, is not romantic, but psychiatric. Primarily it is an interest in the "under-dog," in the man or woman with a complex; and something of this he says in his preface to *The Roaring Girl*, the play about the notorious Moll Frith:

Worse things, I must needs confess, the world has taxed her for than has been written of her; but 'tis the excellency of a writer to leave things better than he finds 'em; though some obscene fellow, that cares not what he writes against others... though such a one would have ripped up the most nasty vice that ever hell belched forth, and presented it to a modest assembly, yet we rather wish in such discoveries, where reputation lies bleeding, a slackness of truth than fulness of slander.

This is the spirit behind the enormously enlarging tragedies, *Women, Beware Women* and *The Changeling*. Middleton received the story of de Flores and Beatrice-Joanna from a Puritan homilist's book<sup>49</sup> as an ultimate example of lechery and blood-lust. He palliates nothing, analyzes everything, and dismisses all with only a single moral: Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Middleton stands with Jonson as a supreme dramatic realist, but two methods could hardly be more different. Jonson organizes microscopically, and attains a perfection of structure impossible even for himself to abide by. Jonson was never for a moment doubtful about labeling the knaves and fools in his dramatic world or any other. Middleton's plays are case histories, put together in whatever way the data accumulate.<sup>50</sup> His judgments are never final, and his characters are seldom damned. There is just one superlative that can be bestowed on Middleton: no artist of his time equals him in the un-Jonsonian ability to hold his hands off his people. *Laissez-faire* is the

<sup>48</sup> Jonson succeeded him in this post.

<sup>49</sup> John Reynolds, *The Triumphs of God's Revenge against... Murther* (1621).

<sup>50</sup> See W. D. Dunkel, *The Dramatic Technique of Thomas Middleton in His Comedies of London Life* (Chicago, 1925); R. C. Bald, "The Sources of Middleton's City Comedies," *JEGP*, xxxiii (1934). 373-387.

true source of his power. Even sympathy must be kept under, as he reminds the audience in the last words of *The Changeling*:

All we can do to comfort one another,  
To stay a brother's sorrow for a brother,  
To dry a child from the kind father's eyes,  
Is to no purpose: it rather multiplies.

William  
Rowley

It may be considered lucky that so idiosyncratic an artist had often at his elbow a real man of the theatre. William Rowley (c. 1585-1626) was a farcical actor of repute, playing fat-clown parts, and he had also a pretty skill in producing popular plays.<sup>51</sup> The three or four he composed alone—e.g., *All's Lost by Lust* and *A Shoemaker a Gentleman*—show ability both in melodrama and in low comedy.<sup>52</sup> He collaborated with many of the leading dramatists: with Heywood in *Fortune by Land and Sea*, Ford and Dekker in *The Witch of Edmonton*, Webster in *A Cure for a Cuckold*; and particularly with Middleton, during the latter part of their careers, in some of the best plays of the Middleton canon: *A Fair Quarrel* (1617), *The Changeling* (1622), and *The Spanish Gipsy* (1622). His hearty touch and his eye on the box-office did no harm, but his blank verse must not be mistaken for Middleton's. The first scene of *The Changeling*, which Rowley wrote, contains such wretched lines as

Fates, do your worst, I'll please myself with sight  
Of her at all opportunities,

and

Or follow'd him in fate, had not the late league  
Prevented me.

A Game at  
Chess

"You can't tamper with life" was Middleton's principle. Just once, at the close of his work, he came into the open and expressed himself as a partisan. It was an occasion when practically all London, court and city alike, joined with him in rejoicings over the failure of Prince Charles's Spanish match. *A Game at Chess*<sup>53</sup> (1624) is based on fugitive pamphlets that in the play are held together by dramatic symbolism and by inserted episodes more outspoken and also more sentimental than had been Middleton's way. The allegory, through which the contemporary figures and plots in an intricate game of international politics are represented by movements of players on a

<sup>51</sup> Rowley was also the author of a prose skit, *A Search for Money, or the Lamentable Complaint for the Loss of the Wandering Knight, Monsieur l'Argent* (1609; reprinted, *Percy Soc.*, II, 1840), which, though long drawn out, has some liveliness and realistic value. It deals with the current depression of trade and comes to the uncomfortable conclusion that ready money, invisible both in London and in the country, has been locked up in hell and will never again be allowed to circulate.

<sup>52</sup> See C. W. Stork's edition of *All's Lost by Lust* (Philadelphia, 1910); P. G. Wiggin, *An Inquiry into the Authorship of the Middleton-Rowley Plays* (Boston, 1897); A. Symons, "Middleton and Rowley," in *Studies in the Elizabethan Drama* (1919), pp. 211-261; W. D. Dunkel, "Did not Rowley Merely Revise Middleton?" *PMLA*, XLVIII (1933), 799-805.

<sup>53</sup> Ed. R. C. Bald (Cambridge, 1929). See B. M. Wagner, "New Allusions to *A Game at Chess*," *PMLA*, XLIV (1929), 827-834; J. R. Moore, "The Contemporary Significance of Middleton's *Game at Chess*," *PMLA*, L (1935), 761-768.

chess-board, is too complex to be easily followed by modern readers; but on a stage in which each pawn had human proportions, and before an audience that recognized each detail, the effect was unparalleled. The Globe Theatre seems never to have been so crowded, till the Spanish ambassador forced it to be closed; and copies of the text, printed or manuscript, could not be multiplied fast enough. Rowley had no share in the writing, but played the great burlesque part of the Fat Bishop.<sup>54</sup> Within a year or two, he, Middleton, and King James all died, and an era had ended.

On the periphery of drama lie forms of semi-dramatic spectacle and entertainment, aristocratic or popular, of which the most important is the masque. The origins of such festivities have been sought deep in the past, in folk-customs and fertility rites. Whatever the validity of such speculations, there are records of "mummings" and "disguisings" at the English court from the period of Edward III. In the fifteenth century there were "royal entries" into London and other cities and analogous pageants for the reception of distinguished personages. These were stationary or processional, more or less allegorical in theme, accompanied by music, and either pantomimic or with dialogue, though speech was quite subordinate to spectacle. The term *mumming* is significant. Of festivities at court there are abundant records from the time of Henry VIII. The central feature of some entertainments was a dance in which the maskers, noblemen and gentlemen (and on a famous occasion King Henry himself), chose partners from among the spectators. This intermingling of actors and guests, "after the manner of Italy" (if the much discussed phrase is to be so interpreted), became an established convention; a vestige of it is discernible in *Comus*. During the reign of Elizabeth we find such comparatively simple and rudimentary forms as Sir Philip Sidney's charming *Lady of the May* (1578), an open-air entertainment for the reception of royalty; but these affairs could be elaborate and costly, as when the Earl of Leicester received Elizabeth at Kenilworth. At court the Queen discouraged lavish expense. The fashion influenced some plays, notably Peele's *Arraignement of Paris*, and into other plays short masques are introduced. In episodes of *The Faerie Queene* the atmosphere and stately splendor of processional spectacle are evoked. But the form came to its full flowering at the extravagant court of James I and it lasted through the reign of Charles I. The modern reader, who has before him only the prose synopses of the action and dry descriptions of the scenes and costumes and movement to supplement the texts, must reconstruct in his imagination the gorgeousness of these occasions. Other masques, probably not so costly, were produced at the Inns of Court.

The first fully developed court masque is Samuel Daniel's *Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* (1604), which celebrates allegorically the blessings bestowed upon England by the new monarch. Among other poets who designed masques and supplied the accompanying speeches and dialogue were

*Semi-  
dramatic  
Forms*

*The  
Masque*

<sup>54</sup> See R. C. Bald in *LTLS*, Feb. 6, 1930, p. 102.



George Chapman, Francis Beaumont, Thomas Campion, and (at a later date) James Shirley. But it was Ben Jonson who fully exploited the possibilities for poetry inherent in the genre. Space is wanting to name here all his masques and entertainments (see the texts in the *Oxford Jonson*, Volume VII, and the introductions to each in *ibid.*, II, 249-334); but there may be singled out for bare mention those great creations, *The Masque of Blackness* (1605) and *The Masque of Queens* (1609), and the charming hymeneal masque for Lord Haddington (1608), which, because Jonson gave it no title, Gifford called *The Hue and Cry after Cupid*. Jonson, elaborating upon the clownish "antics" of earlier spectacles, developed the grotesque and often coarsely humorous "antimasque" which ushers in, and serves as a foil to, the authentic masque with all its dignity and magnificence. He made abundant use—sometimes ponderous use but often exquisitely graceful and fanciful—of classical mythology, English country life, folklore and superstition, far-fetched travelers' tales, and other materials drawn from his prodigious learning; he employed also his eloquence and his lyric gift. Weight and gravity might be added to delicacy and grace, so that in his hands the masque sometimes became the vehicle for satire and social criticism and bold topical allusion, and for moral exhortation—thus pointing the way to *Comus*. The basic patterns and the poetry were worthy to be wedded to the elements of spectacle designed by the great architect Inigo Jones, first the poet's partner and afterwards his rival for acclaim, who was responsible for the ornate settings, the ingenious machinery, and the elaborate baroque costumes.

Of various subsidiary forms, some of them provincial and rustic, there is room to mention only the annual shows in London at the inauguration of the Lord Mayor. These were professional, allegorical, and topical in character. Among the dramatists who designed them and supplied the texts were George Peele and Thomas Middleton.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup> For the student of various kinds of entertainments John Nichols, *Progresses . . . of Queen Elizabeth* (3v, 1823) and *Progresses . . . of King James I* (4v, 1828) are still indispensable. There is an abundance of archivistic material in Albert Feuillerat, *Documents relating to the Office of the Revels at Court in the Time of Edward VI and Queen Mary* (Louvain, 1914) and idem, *Queen Elizabeth* (Louvain, 1908). See also R. Brotanek, *Die Englischen Maskenspiele* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1902); W. W. Greg, *A List of Masques, Pageants, &c* (1902); Robert Withington, *English Pageantry* (2v, Cambridge, Mass., 1918-1920); Percy Simpson and C. F. Bell, *Designs by Inigo Jones for Masques and Plays at Court* (Oxford, 1924); Allardyce Nicoll, *Stuart Masques and the Renaissance Stage* (1937). The Continental, ritualistic, and folklore backgrounds are explored in Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque* (Cambridge, 1927). On the annual civic shows see F. W. Fairholt, *Lord Mayor's Pageants* (1843-1844), and, for antecedent developments, Robert Withington, *English Pageantry: An Historical Outline* (2v, Cambridge, Mass., 1918-20).

## IV

### Jacobean Drama: III. The Romantic Playwrights

If the more than twenty plays which John Day<sup>1</sup> (c. 1574-1640), in conjunction with other writers, prepared for Henslowe between 1598 and 1603 had survived, he would probably appear as just another competent hack-dramatist working along stereotyped lines. There was, however, a genuine vein of dreamy poetry in Day and a disposition to seek strange worlds, though these qualities show themselves fitfully, and in unstable combination with the bright social patter which was Day's other chief gift. *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607), by Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins, exaggerates the actual adventures of the three Sherleys in the East and makes its appeal to lovers of the exotic.<sup>2</sup> It is a lower-middle-class play for the Red Bull audience, and is artistically not much superior to Heywood's *Four Prentices of London*. Day's *Isle of Gulls* (1606) seeks to put Sidney's *Arcadia* on the stage, but neither faithfully nor with much clearness of narrative. *Law Tricks, or Who Would Have Thought It?* (1608) has a lively intrigue complicated by the escape of a duke's daughter from Turkish marauders and a dénouement that makes use of the potion business of *Romeo and Juliet*. The third and best of these comedies, all acted by the Children of the Revels, is *Humor out of Breath*<sup>3</sup> (1608), which presents the pretty, fantastic story of an usurping and a banished duke of Mantua and their six children, who pair off preposterously in treble matrimony. Day uses a great amount of riming verse, and likes scenes of pastoral disguise as well as scenes of daring wit. He may have begun *Humor out of Breath* with the intention of writing a humor comedy. The principal young man is named Aspero, and on his first appearance suggests Jonson's Asper (in *Every Man Out*), if not Jonson himself, but he early loses his humor and becomes a guide into the land of romantic adventure.

Day's finest work is not a play, but *The Parliament of Bees*, extant in a quarto of 1641 and also in a less carefully revised manuscript.<sup>4</sup> It consists of twelve little scenes, or "characters," as he calls them, in couplet verse, picturing a variety of human types and situations by means of bees. Nothing much daintier has come to us from the seventeenth century. Day had the rare

John Day

Day's  
Parliament  
of Bees

<sup>1</sup> See A. H. Bullen, *The Works of John Day* (1881). *The Parliament of Bees* and *Humor out of Breath* (ed. A. Symons) are in the Mermaid Series volume, *Nero and Other Plays*.

<sup>2</sup> See S. C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose* (1937), pp. 504-509, and "Islam and England during the Renaissance," *Moslem World*, xxxi (1941). 371-399.

<sup>3</sup> See M. E. Borish, "John Day's *Humor out of Breath*," *Harvard Studies & Notes in Phil. & Lit.*, xvi (1934). 1-11.

<sup>4</sup> See S. R. Golding, "The Parliament of Bees," *RES*, III (1927). 280-304.

ability to improve his own work, and in most of these scenes has simply translated bits of normal drama into the world of bees and thus salvaged them for immortality.<sup>5</sup> In the last two "characters" Oberon and his fairies are brought in, and the poetic medium is quickened into tetrameter.

Francis  
Beaumont

The  
Woman-  
Hater

No more amiable personality than that of Francis Beaumont<sup>6</sup> (c. 1584-1616) has recorded itself in English plays. He was the most original, the sanest, and probably the wittiest of the cavalier dramatists. Born into a higher rank of the county aristocracy than Marston, he followed the same course a scant decade later, through Oxford and the Inns of Court<sup>7</sup> to the theatres of the boys' companies, and he came under Ben Jonson's influence at the period when Jonson was first displaying his full greatness. Beaumont was one of the earliest and truest of the "Sons of Ben," and his first play, *The Woman-Hater* (1607), is Jonsonian comedy sentimentalized. The clever bipartite plot occupies a single day and goes up and down the street of a little Italian city, from the duke's palace at one end to the bagnio at the other. Gondarino, the woman-hater, and Lazarillo, the glutton, are humor characters in boyish exaggeration; and there is witty satire at the expense of the new-made favorites at court and the political informers, who since the Gunpowder Plot of November, 1605, had been blighting England.<sup>8</sup> Essentially, however, *The Woman-Hater* is a romantic play about pleasant, well-bred people. In the Prologue Beaumont explains his attitude:

I dare not call it comedy or tragedy; 'tis perfectly neither. A play it is which was meant to make you laugh . . . Some things in it you may meet with which are out of the common road. A duke there is, and the scene lies in Italy, as those two things lightly we never miss. But you shall not find in it the ordinary and overworn trade of jesting at lords and courtiers and citizens, without taxation of any particular or new vice by them found out, but at the persons of them. Such he that made this thinks vile, and for his own part vows that he did never think but that a lord-born might be a wise man, and a courtier an honest man.

The Knight  
of the  
Burning  
Pestle

When Beaumont began to write, the newest literary taste was that for Spanish fiction, brought in by the social prominence of the Spanish embassy at King James's court as much as by its own outstanding merit and the current lack of such an art in England. One of the main characters in *The Woman-Hater* is a variation of the famous Lazarillo de Tormes; and in Beaumont's next play, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, there is undoubted reference to *Don Quixote*, though it is unlikely that the dramatist had actually read Cervantes' novel, the first part of which had been printed in Spain in 1605 and in Brussels in 1607. The play was probably produced by the children at Blackfriars about 1608. If it is not the greatest dramatic burlesque in English, it is certainly the most genuinely mirth-provoking and the most

<sup>5</sup> The plays drawn upon are *The Wonder of a Kingdom* (1636) and *The Noble Soldier* (1634), in which Day seems to have collaborated with Dekker and Samuel Rowley respectively.

<sup>6</sup> See C. M. Gayley, *Beaumont the Dramatist* (1914), and references under Fletcher, below.

<sup>7</sup> Beaumont left Oxford very young, without a degree, and entered the Inner Temple in 1600.

<sup>8</sup> See A. W. Upton, "Allusions to James I and his Court in Marston's *Fawn* and Beaumont's *Woman-Hater*," *PMLA*, XLIV (1929). 1048-1065.

genial. It gives a cavalier aristocrat's view of the London middle class. Their purse-proud boisterousness, social inexperience, appalling aesthetic tastes, and passion for civic entertainments are uproariously ridiculed, without the least reflection upon their lives or characters. The humor is more extravagant, but much more kindly, than that in *Eastward Ho!* The citizens are pictured without rancor and without damaging contrast with cavalier types. If there is a cavalier type in this play, it must be old Master Merrythought, the red-nosed, ballad-singing reprobate, who is one of the most delightful progenitors of Mr. Micawber.

One cannot say just when Beaumont and John Fletcher (1579-1625) began to work together. Slight traces of Fletcher's hand have been found in the two Beaumont plays just discussed. It is certain that by 1610 the two dramatists were collaborating in plays which established forever the prestige of this famous partnership.<sup>9</sup> *The Maid's Tragedy*, which is rather sentimental than tragic, and the tragicomedies *Philaster* and *A King and No King*<sup>10</sup> stand at the head of their performance. In all these the guiding hand is Beaumont's, and the great majority of the lines are in his style. The desire for escape is the chief characteristic. The plots are freely invented and set in strange places; Rhodes, Messina, and Armenia, where young patricians find themselves crushed under the coarse burdens of the world and battle for a better life. Beaumont is the great delineator of these febrile types, whom love, honor, and friendship drive to ecstatic pain, and sometimes to suicide. They are often strongly reminiscent of characters in Shakespeare's later plays, but are markedly more fragile.<sup>11</sup> They are defeated by the grossness that surrounds them and frequently talk like disciples of Rousseau, as when *Philaster* exclaims:

Beaumont  
and Fletcher

Oh that I had been nourish'd in these woods  
With milk of goats and acorns, and not known  
The right of crowns nor the dissembling trains  
Of women's looks; but digg'd myself a cave,  
Where I, my fire, my cattle, and my bed  
Might have been shut together in one shed! (*Philaster*, iv, ii).

Beaumont's style is beautifully suited to these themes. It is in structure and emotional effect much like the style of Shakespeare's last plays, rich in run-on lines and very sweetly modulated. It tends to elegiac and epigrammatic neat-

<sup>9</sup> See S. A. Tannenbaum, *Beaumont and Fletcher: A Concise Bibliography* (1938). The complete text is in *The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher* (10v, Cambridge, 1905-1912); critical text with valuable commentary in the incomplete Variorum ed. (4v, twenty plays only, 1904-1913). The best general guide is E. H. C. Oliphant, *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (New Haven, 1927), with supplement, "Some Additional Notes," *PQ*, ix (1930). 7-22. Consult also R. C. Bald, *Bibliographical Studies in the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio of 1647* (Bibl. Soc., 1938), and B. Maxwell, *Studies in Beaumont, Fletcher, and Massinger* (Chapel Hill, 1939).

<sup>10</sup> See A. Mizener, "The High Design of *A King and No King*," *MP*, xxxviii (1940). 133-154.

<sup>11</sup> See D. M. McKeithan, *The Debt to Shakespeare in the Beaumont-and-Fletcher Plays* (Austin, 1938); but see also A. H. Thorndike, *The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakspeare* (Worcester, Mass., 1901).

ness, and, without being at all stilted or verbose, strikes one as being the veritable language of ladies and gentlemen such as society has not yet quite succeeded in developing.

The Scornful Lady

An even more popular play of slightly later date, *The Scornful Lady*, has a preponderance of Fletcher in it and is much more mundane, being a strict comedy of London life. It introduces some very famous humor characters in Abigail, the "waiting gentlewoman," Sir Roger the curate, and Morecraft the usurer; but the main interest is love in high life, fantastically considered, and the chief action resolves itself into a duel of the sexes, represented by the ingenious Loveless and the quite unnamed "Lady," who (till the fifth act) outguesses him. This is the theme that Fletcher very successfully returned to in his later *Wild Goose Chase*, and then passed on to Congreve. It is not in Beaumont's spirit, and the latter's contribution may not be very much more than the long opening scene and the second scene of Act v.

Fletcher without Beaumont

Beaumont's life as a playwright was shorter than Marston's. In 1612 or 1613 he married and retired from London to live the short remainder of his life as a landed aristocrat in Kent, leaving Fletcher to bear the chief responsibility for the colossal "Beaumont-Fletcher" output, which ultimately amounted to over fifty plays. In nearly all these Fletcher had a considerable part, and in something like a third of the number his is the only hand that has been clearly detected. It is an easy hand to detect, for Fletcher early developed an individual type of blank verse, marked by an enormous proportion (c. 90 percent) of end-stopped lines and an unprecedented number (c. 70 percent) of double or treble endings. His use of words is very diffuse, where Beaumont prided himself on being laconic. Fletcher makes his blank verse so conversational that his plays have no need of prose and are perhaps the most readable of all verse dramas. The earliest is probably *The Faithful Shepherdess*, a pastoral after the general fashion of such Italian works as Guarini's *Pastor Fido* and Cinthio's *Egle*.<sup>12</sup> Fletcher's preface to it contains his well-known definition of the new type of play that became so closely linked with his name.

The Faithful Shepherdess

A tragicomedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no comedy.

It was acted by one of the boys' companies about 1608, but, like *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, was so novel in method that it failed on the stage, and was immediately after printed with commendatory verses by Beaumont, Chapman, and Jonson. Fletcher's style is still immature in this lusciously romantic piece, but his graceful fluency is already conspicuous, and one recognizes in passages like the Priest of Pan's riming hymn in Act II the origin of the "pretty paganism" of Keats's *Endymion*.

<sup>12</sup> See V. M. Jeffery, "Italian Influence in Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*," *MLR*, xxi (1926), 147-158; W. W. Greg, *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama* (1906), pp. 264-282.

More normal Fletcherian tragicomedy<sup>13</sup> is contained in *The Loyal Subject*,<sup>14</sup> *A Wife for a Month*, and *The Mad Lover*, all marked by great extravagance of plot; and this sort of thing is still more charmingly done in *Women Pleased* (on the theme, in part, of Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Tale*); in *The Humorous Lieutenant*, which combines scenes of excruciating comicality with an elevated Oriental plot suggestive of *A King and No King*; and in *The Chances*, based on one of Cervantes' *Exemplary Novels* first published in 1613. Another of these tales was used in *Love's Pilgrimage* (which may not be entirely Fletcher's); and his remarkably close contact with contemporary Spain appears again in *The Pilgrim*, founded on Lope de Vega's play of the same title. Best of all, possibly, is *The Island Princess*, the exotic and exciting play that Fletcher constructed, about 1622, from Argensola's Spanish history of the conquest of the Molucca Islands (1609). The literature of escape could hardly go farther, and Milton remembered to great effect the languorous odors with which Fletcher suffuses his islands of Ternate and Tidore:

Fletcher's  
Tragi-  
comedy

We are arriv'd among the blessed islands,  
Where every wind that rises blows perfumes,  
And every breath of air is like an incense.<sup>15</sup>

The rather vague borderline between tragicomedy and pure comedy may be thought to be crossed in the early *Monsieur Thomas* (based on Part two of d'Urfé's French novel, *Astrée*, 1610), which is very uproarious and also very sentimental; and in the masterly dramatization of another of Cervantes' *novelas*, *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*, which is one of Fletcher's last and best plays. Lighter comic work—often very light and very broad, but seldom unlaughable—is found in *Wit without Money* and in Fletcher's sequel or counterpart to *The Taming of the Shrew*, which he called *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed*, and which may be one of his very earliest plays. At the opposite emotional pole from these stand another early play, *Cupid's Revenge* (a melodrama derived from two stories in Sidney's *Arcadia*), and two early tragedies of great sentimental power, in plot Roman and British-Roman respectively, *Valentinian* and *Bonduca*.

Fletcher knew the remedy for a tired and distrustful world, which was not to satirize but divert it. His plays are artificially flavored, and the condiments he uses most are variety and vehemence. To be sure, the variety is somewhat superficial, and the vehemence may be specious. These are less deeply poetic qualities than Beaumont's vibrant idealism and gnomic grace, but they have never lost their attractiveness for average humanity. The reading of Fletcher is like a long voyage through a tropical archipelago.

<sup>13</sup> For careful discussion see E. M. Waith, "Characterization in John Fletcher's Tragicomedies," *RES*, xix (1943), 141-164; and on the general type see F. H. Ristine, *English Tragicomedy* (1910).

<sup>14</sup> The plays mentioned in this paragraph are not listed in chronological order. Modern criticism has been much more successful in apportioning the authorship of the Beaumont-Fletcher-Massinger plays than in determining their dates. A list in approximate chronological order is given in *CHEL*, vi, 137-140.

<sup>15</sup> *The Island Princess*, i. iii. Compare *Paradise Lost*, ii. 636 ff., iv. 159 ff.



The air is sultry and tempestuous, the landscapes are over-florid; but no one forgets the experience, though most of the details—except the magnificent songs<sup>16</sup> and the electric scenes of tension—will soon fade from memory. Fletcher was with Chapman and Shakespeare in the small list of men whom Ben Jonson professed to love, and he was chosen to be Shakespeare's official successor at the new Globe of 1613. Beginning as a writer for the boys' companies, he soon rose to the service of the King's Men, and after collaborating with their leading poet in *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*<sup>17</sup> continued as the chief dramatist for that premier company till his death in the plague of 1625. Among all the playwrights of the day no more practical substitute for Shakespeare could have been found. Fletcher kept his two theatres of the Globe and Blackfriars very prosperous, and to contemporary critics it was not always as evident as it should have been that they had suffered a great loss in the exchange they had made. Even the exquisite poet, Henry Vaughan, concludes his lines "Upon Mr. Fletcher's Plays" (1647) with the words:

This or that age may write, but never see  
A wit that dares run parallel with thee.  
True, BEN must live; but bate him, and thou hast  
Undone all future wits and matched the past.

Fletcher and  
Massinger

For about a dozen years Fletcher provided the King's company with three or four plays per annum; and in this Herculean task he received occasional assistance from a number of other dramatists, such as William Rowley, Nathan Field, and even Jonson. Some of the most interesting plays —e.g., *The Knight of Malta*, *The Bloody Brother*, and *The Fair Maid of the Inn*—offer very difficult problems of multiple authorship. Fletcher's great associate, however, during his latter years was Philip Massinger, who combined with him in more than a dozen plays before 1623. They include many of the best in the Fletcher canon: the tragedies of *Thierry and Theodoret*, *Barnavelt*, *The False One*, *The Prophetess*, *The Double Marriage*, and *The Lover's Progress*; and, among the tragicomedies, *The Little French Lawyer*, *Beggars' Bush*, *The Custom of the Country*, *The Spanish Curate*, *The Sea-voyage*, and *The Elder Brother*. It is to be remarked that these are mixed plays. Of the tragedies, only *Barnavelt*, out of contemporary Dutch history, and *Thierry and Theodoret*, from an ancient French chronicle, have much tragic feeling, though they all contain violent deaths. The tragicomedies are wonderful blends of farce and high romance. Among the most interesting of them all are *The False One*, which handles much the same subject as Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, and *The Sea-voyage*, which is a pendant to *The Island Princess*, dealing with adventures amid the farthest seas. *The Little French Lawyer* and *The Spanish Curate* have some of the most rollick-

<sup>16</sup> See E. H. Fellowes, *Songs and Lyrics from the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (1928); E. S. Lindsay, "The Music of the Songs in Fletcher's Plays," *SP*, xxi (1924). 325-356, and "The Original Music for Beaumont's Play, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*," *SP*, xxvi (1929). 425-443.

<sup>17</sup> See Theodore Spencer, "*The Two Noble Kinsmen*," *MP*, xxxvi (1939). 255-276.

ing scenes in dramatic literature; but perhaps the best play of the group is *Beggars' Bush*, which, without servile imitation, contrives to combine the main romantic interests in *As You Like It* and *The Merchant of Venice* with the vagrant comedy in Jonson's *Masque of the Metamorphosed Gipsies* (1621).

Massinger's contribution to the "Beaumont-Fletcher" Folios is in bulk very considerably larger than Beaumont's; but in the plays he wrote with Fletcher Massinger was never the controlling partner, and this may have something to do with the fact that Massinger withdrew from participation and took service with another company a couple of years before Fletcher's death. It is Fletcher who gives these plays their characteristic flavor, which is not very different from that of his unaided work. It is usually he who handles the great scenes of climax or boisterous nonsense, and who conceives the most original characters, while Massinger, who is one of the world's finest dramatic technicians, attends usefully to the openings and closes and the general coherence.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See M. Chelli, *Étude sur la collaboration de Massinger avec Fletcher et son groupe* (Paris, 1926).

# V

## Caroline Drama, 1625-1642

Philip  
Massinger

Philip Massinger<sup>1</sup> (1583-1640) was born at Salisbury, a few miles from the Earl of Pembroke's Wilton House, and was most likely given his Christian name in compliment to the Earl's brother-in-law, Sir Philip Sidney. His father was a man of standing, fellow of Merton College, Oxford, Member of Parliament, and confidential agent of the Herbert family.<sup>2</sup> These influences have affected much of the son's literary work, as was long ago pointed out by the historian, S. R. Gardiner:

In many of Massinger's plays we have a treatment of the politics of the day so plain and transparent, that any one who possesses only a slight acquaintance with the history of the reigns of the first two Stuarts can read it at a glance.<sup>3</sup>

Massinger's loyalty is to the old aristocracy as against both royal absolutism and the ambition of courtly parvenus. One of his earlier plays, *The Bond-man*<sup>4</sup> (1623), which is dedicated to Philip, Earl of Montgomery, satirizes the amateur-admiral Buckingham, the young and powerful favorite of King James. *The Great Duke of Florence*<sup>5</sup> (1627), written soon after the death of James, seems to present Buckingham less rancorously in his relation to both the old and the new king. Two later plays, *Believe as You List*<sup>6</sup> (1631) and *The Maid of Honor*<sup>7</sup> (1632?), introduce propaganda in behalf of King Charles's unfortunate brother-in-law, the Elector Frederick, who was one of the outstanding victims of Spanish diplomacy and the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648).

The core of seriousness in Massinger shows itself also in his attitude to religion. He collaborated with Dekker in *The Virgin-Martyr*, an essentially Catholic tragedy of St. Dorothea. In his *Renegado*<sup>8</sup> (1624) the noblest character is a Jesuit priest; and in *The Maid of Honor* the heroine, Camiola, resolves the play by a course unusual on the English stage, that of entering

<sup>1</sup> Gifford's edition of Massinger appeared first in 1805 and was reprinted by F. Cunningham (1868, etc.). Ten plays are in the Mermaid Series, ed. A. Symonds. There is no modern collected edition, but most of the plays have been elaborately edited as indicated below. See S. A. Tannenbaum, *Philip Massinger: A Concise Bibliography* (1938); A. H. Cruickshank, *Philip Massinger* (Oxford, 1920); M. Chelli, *Le Drame de Massinger* (Paris, 1924); B. T. Spencer, "Philip Massinger," in *Seventeenth Century Studies*, ed. R. Shafer (1933), pp. 3-119.

<sup>2</sup> See M. Eccles, "Arthur Massinger," *LTLS*, July 16, 1931, p. 564.

<sup>3</sup> "The Political Element in Massinger," *Trans. New Shakspere Soc.*, 1875-6, pp. 314-331.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. B. T. Spencer (Princeton, 1932).

<sup>5</sup> Ed. J. M. Stochholm (Baltimore, 1933).

<sup>6</sup> Reprinted, Malone Soc. (1927).

<sup>7</sup> Ed. E. A. W. Bryne (1927).

<sup>8</sup> See W. G. Rice, "The Sources of Massinger's *The Renegado*," *PQ*, xi (1932). 65-75.

a nunnery. His style, always suave and lucid, is often over-rhetorical, and his characters commonly lack the vitality that Fletcher could give. His forte is dramatic structure, and here very few seventeenth-century playwrights could equal him. *The Duke of Milan*<sup>9</sup> (c. 1621), a transplanting of the Herod and Mariamne story to sixteenth-century Italy with many grafts from *Othello*, and *The Unnatural Combat*<sup>10</sup> on a Cenci-like theme of horror, are deftly planned, but melodramatic. *The Roman Actor*<sup>11</sup> (1626), which he termed "the most perfect birth of my Minerva," is indeed a noble tragedy in solemn sort; but it is in comedy that Massinger most escapes from the mechanical and drab excellence which is his weakness. His serious nature seemed to require the fillip that comedy gave, and it is his comedy that best justifies the very high tributes which modern critics have paid him: "next to Shakespeare as a dramatist pure and simple,"<sup>12</sup> and "our first conscious producer of modern literary comedy."<sup>13</sup>

Massinger's finest comedies are two on contemporary English themes: *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*<sup>14</sup> (1626) and *The City Madam*<sup>15</sup> (1632). The first is made on the formula of Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*. Massinger's play is twenty years the later, and may well appear two centuries later, so expertly has it been modernized. He builds it around the actual figure of Sir Giles Mompesson<sup>16</sup> (1584-1651), a notorious extortioner of the day and protégé of Buckingham, who had been unmasked and convicted in 1621. Massinger has enlarged him into the terrific Sir Giles Overreach, who has the lineaments of the modern city boss, keeping out of office himself (unlike Mompesson)—"in being out of office I am out of danger," he says—and executing his sinister schemes by means of venal judges and slavish henchmen. The wild young realistic rogue of Middleton's intrigue comedy is replaced by a new type of hero in Wellborn, the good-hearted spendthrift, who in his own character and in such descendants as Charles Surface of *The School for Scandal* became the idol of the eighteenth-century stage. Middleton's realistic plotting is replaced by a romantic trick that is the pivot on which Massinger makes his whole play revolve. It is but a whisper in the closing lines of Act 1, seen but not heard by the spectators, whereby Lady Allworth endows Wellborn with that most priceless of modern boons: credit. The cataclysmic dénouement, which seems generations more recent than that of Jonson's *Alchemist*, is engineered by recourse to modern chemistry. From the opening scene to the last this

A New  
Way to Pay  
Old Debts.

<sup>9</sup> Ed. T. W. Baldwin (Lancaster, Pa., 1918). In this connection bare mention may be made of Robert Gomersall's Oxford play, *The Tragedy of Lodovick Sforza, Duke of Milan* (1628; ed. B. R. Pearn, Louvain, 1933), which keeps much closer to history than Massinger does.

<sup>10</sup> Ed. R. S. Telfer (Princeton, 1932).

<sup>11</sup> Ed. W. M. Sandidge (Princeton, 1929).

<sup>12</sup> Cruickshank, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>13</sup> C. M. Gayley, *Representative English Comedies*, III (1914), p. lxxxix. Note also William Archer's high tribute to Massinger in *The Old Drama and the New* (1929), pp. 100 ff.

<sup>14</sup> Ed. A. H. Cruickshank (Oxford, 1926).

<sup>15</sup> Ed. Rudolf Kirk (Princeton, 1934).

<sup>16</sup> See R. H. Ball, "Sir Giles Mompesson and Sir Giles Overreach," in *Parrott Presentation Vol.* (1935), pp. 277-287, and *The Amazing Career of Sir Giles Overreach* (Princeton, 1939).

play moves with enormous power. Massinger's *vis comica* is as pulverizing as Jonson's is in *Volpone*, though far less human; and as Edmund Kean played *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* in the early nineteenth century, the effects seem to have exceeded anything that can be expected or desired of comedy:

In the famous scene in the fifth act the power of Kean's acting was so intense that women in the audience shrieked with terror and Lord Byron was seized with a convulsive fit. That experienced actress, Mrs. Glover, fainted on the stage, Mrs. Horn staggered to a chair and wept aloud; while Munden, who played Marrall, stood so transfixed with terror that he had to be removed from the stage.<sup>17</sup>

The City  
Madam

Kean likewise revived *The City Madam* under the title of *Riches*, and John Keats reviewed the performance with approval in *The Champion* newspaper (December 21, 1817). Here Massinger seems to have set himself the task of modernizing another great comedy of the previous age, *Eastward Ho!* Again he adds a Dickens-like super-monster in Luke Frugal, the hypocrite, who has the same malign brilliance as *Overreach*. The plot concerns the troubles of a sober and wealthy citizen, Sir John Frugal, with his pampered wife and daughters. It is the situation of *Eastward Ho!*, but here both daughters are perverse and both apprentices riotous. Even the Virginian interest of *Eastward Ho!* is paralleled in a scene of most caustic cynicism, in which Luke, newly come into the family wealth, bargains with some pretended Indian chiefs over the sale of his undesired sister-in-law and nieces for export. Massinger, said Arthur Symonds, "is the late twilight of the long and splendid day of which Marlowe was the dawn." The twilight came on robed in solemn clouds of rhetorical tragedy and brilliant coruscations of comic lightning, but what Hamlet called the modesty of nature had largely disappeared from view.

John Ford

John Ford<sup>18</sup> (1586-c. 1655), whose name often appears characteristically anagrammatized on his title-pages as *Fide honor* (by faith, honor), was the greatest dramatist of the reign of Charles I. He had collaborated with Dekker in various earlier plays, mainly lost. One of these, still surviving, is *The Sun's Darling* (1624), a "choral masque" which contains passages of very great beauty. The eight plays<sup>19</sup> that are Ford's unaided work all probably belong to the reign of Charles; none can have been written much before the author's fortieth year. Four are comedies or tragicomedies, and would be of little interest but for their connection with his four transcendent trag-

<sup>17</sup> John Parker, quoted in Cruickshank's ed., p. 129.

<sup>18</sup> Gifford's edition of Ford, revised by A. Dyce (1869), is of lasting importance. A more scientific text is offered by W. Bang and H. de Vocht (Louvain, 1908-1927; with text of *The Queen*, ed. W. Bang, Louvain, 1905). Five plays are in the Mermaid Series volume, with introduction by Havelock Ellis. The best commentaries are M. J. Sargeant, *John Ford* (Oxford, 1935), and G. T. Sensabaugh, *The Tragic Muse of John Ford* (1945).

<sup>19</sup> This number includes *The Queen, or the Excellency of her Sex* (1653), which internal evidence alone assigns to Ford. See H. D. Sykes, "John Ford's Posthumous Play, *The Queen*," in *Sidelights on Elizabethan Drama* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 173-182; and *ibid.*, pp. 183-199, for assertion of Ford's (unlikely) authorship of *The Spanish Gipsy*. For further addition to the Ford canon see A. Harbage, "Elizabethan-Restoration Palimpsest," *MLR*, xxxv (1940), 287-319, and G. T. Sensabaugh, "Another Play by John Ford," *MLQ*, III (1942), 595-601.

edies. Ford is like no one but Webster, although, with great similarities, these two have also great differences. *The Broken Heart* was acted by the King's Men at Blackfriars sixteen or eighteen years after the same company had performed *The Duchess of Malfi*. Both poets are remarkable for their portraits of suffering women. Both are great dirge-writers, though not otherwise given to song. Neither finds much place for comedy in his serious plays. Ford's prologue to *The Broken Heart* overtly abjures such matter;

*Ford and  
Webster*

The title lends no expectation here  
Of apish laughter, or of some lame jeer  
At place or persons;

and indeed his attempts at comic relief are almost always failures. Like Webster, but less frequently, Ford uses melodramatic devices to deepen his psychological effects. The mechanical chair in *The Broken Heart* and the entrance of Giovanni in *'Tis Pity* with Annabella's heart on his dagger are in the Websterian tradition. The great difference between these writers is in their tone and style. Webster's method is unnaturally violent, Ford's unnaturally quiet. To pass from one to the other is almost like passing from a train-wreck to the incurable ward of a hospital. The lines of Webster which burn themselves unforgettably into our minds—"I am Duchess of Malfi still," etc.—are followed in Ford by bleak and anguished whispers. There is hardly a detachable line in the beautifully intricate fabric of his dramas. This is partly the result of twenty years more of disillusion, and it may partly be the influence of Beaumont, whose marmoreal style Ford seems to have taken as a model.

Ford is, in a noble sense, a psychopathic dramatist, dealing with the pathology of love and honor. In 1621 Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* appeared, and Ford's first published play, *The Lover's Melancholy* (1629), relies very frequently upon this great work. He borrowed from it heavily in the psychology of three of his tragedies as well.<sup>20</sup> *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* is a study of romantic incest, *Love's Sacrifice* of moral (though not actual) adultery, and *The Broken Heart* of various erotic frustrations. Just as in Middleton, there are hardly any bad people in Ford. His characters are their own worst enemies, and are destroyed by psychoses that arise out of generous natures. They are inevitably destroyed, for civilized man is always too weak in this dramatist to cope with the emotional wilderness into which he has wandered. One of Ford's most pathetic, though possibly unconscious, tricks is to recall the days when men and women were stronger: to cast the estimable duke of *Love's Sacrifice* in the role of Othello; to make the old buffoon, Mauruccio, chant,

*Ford's Psy-  
chopathic  
Tragedies*

Thus do we march to honor's haven of bliss,  
To ride in triumph through Persepolis! (*Love's Sacrifice*, II. i),

<sup>20</sup> See S. B. Ewing, *Burtonian Melancholy in the Plays of John Ford* (Princeton, 1940); also G. F. Sensabaugh, "John Ford and Platonic Love in the Court," *SP*, xxxvi (1939). 206-226, and "John Ford and Elizabethan Tragedy," *PQ*, xx (1941). 442-453.



and make Giovanni in *'Tis Pity* speak for a moment like Faustus,

Let poring book-men dream of other worlds;  
My world and all of happiness is here,  
And I 'ld not change it for the best to come:  
A life of pleasure is elysium! (v. iii),

or like Tamburlaine,

why, I hold fate  
Clasp'd in my fist, and could command the course  
Of time's eternal motion (v. v).

The Broken  
Heart

Except when he tries to write comedy, Ford is one of the most refined of dramatists, both in the delicacy of his constructive methods and the essential decency of his probings into disordered soul-states. The gallery of broken hearts in his well-named and well-set Spartan tragedy, where one sees character after character enduring the unendurable till he quietly collapses, is perhaps the best monument of Ford's sympathetic and pessimistic art.

Perkin  
Warbeck

In the year after Burton's *Anatomy* another psychological masterpiece was published, Francis Bacon's *History of the Reign of King Henry VII* (1622); and in this Ford found the motive for his fourth tragedy, *Perkin Warbeck*,<sup>21</sup> which was acted by Queen Henrietta Maria's company and printed in 1634. For a generation there had hardly been a great English history play, and since Marlowe's *Edward II* there had been none of this quietly analytical character.

Studies have of this nature been of late  
So out of fashion, so unfollowed,

Ford apologized in his prologue. To him Perkin offered an irresistibly attractive subject: the sincere and generous imposter, "a king and no king" in the deepest sense. The famous Beaumont-Fletcher play of that title doubtless gave suggestions, just as another aspect of the same play, the incest motive, must have influenced *'Tis Pity*. But in Bacon's analysis of the minds of Perkin and his adversary, the astute Henry VII, Ford found incitement to the subtle character work in which he excelled. The noble personalities of Perkin and his wife, her father, and her discarded lover Dalyell are exquisitely developed, and the two kings, James of Scotland and Henry of England, are wonderfully just studies. The language, which, as Hartley Coleridge said, in all Ford's plays "is as clear as the stars on a frosty night,"<sup>22</sup> is nowhere lovelier or more completely subjected to its dramatic purpose; for instance, in Perkin's farewell to Katherine (III. ii), in which, as so often, the sense of tragic futility is emphasized by an ironic after-echo of Marlowe:

<sup>21</sup> Ford also used a more prosaic source, Thomas Gainsford's *True and Wonderful History of Perkin Warbeck* (1618). See J. L. G. Brereton, "The Sources of Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*," *Anglia*, xxxiv (1911), 194-234, and M. C. Struble's edition of the play (Seattle, 1926). See also Lawrence Babb, "Abnormal Psychology in John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck*," *MLN*, LI (1936), 234-237.

<sup>22</sup> Introduction to *Works of Massinger and Ford* (1840), p. xlv, note.

If thou hear'st  
 A truth of my sad ending by the hand  
 Of some unnatural subject, thou withal  
 Shalt hear how I died worthy of my right  
 By falling like a king; and in the close,  
 Which my last breath shall sound, thy name, thou fairest,  
 Shall sing a requiem to my soul, unwilling  
 Only of greater glory, 'cause divided  
 From such a heaven on earth as life with thee.  
 But these are chimes for funerals: my business  
 Attends on fortune of a sprightlier trump;  
 For love and majesty are reconcil'd,  
 And vow to crown thee empress of the west.

The greatness of *Perkin Warbeck* needs to be dwelt on, lest hasty readers of Ford get the idea that his effects are simply the consequence of lurid or unhealthy subjects.

The example of Jonson's great plays can be traced in most of the later dramatists. It is often strong in Beaumont, Fletcher, and Massinger, though all those writers tended more toward escape and romance than Jonson ordinarily did. The first of his immediate heirs is Nathan Field<sup>23</sup> (1587-1620), who as a boy had been "taken up" or kidnaped for the Chapel Children in time to act important parts in *Cynthia's Revels* and *Poetaster*. Jonson read Horace and Martial with him, and doubtless helped to undo whatever Puritan inheritance Nat might have received from his father, the Reverend John Field, who had been much the same sort of play-hater as Ben's own parent. When Field grew up, he joined the adult actors and was accounted second only to Burbage. Around 1612 he produced two lewd London comedies,<sup>24</sup> *A Woman Is a Weathercock* and *Amends for Ladies*, both acted by the boys' companies. Later he collaborated with Massinger in a fine tragedy, *The Fatal Dowry*<sup>25</sup> (c. 1618), and had a hand in certain Beaumont-Fletcher plays; e.g., *The Knight of Malta* and *Four Plays in One*. Field naturally knew the stage, and he molded his structure, though not his moral philosophy, upon Jonson's. He is adept at bright dialogue, brisk action, and clever disguise. His prose is lively and idiomatic; but his humor characters, though very varied, are superficial, and his verse is un-inspired.

*The School  
of Jonson*

*Nathan  
Field*

Richard Brome<sup>26</sup> (c. 1590-c. 1652) is first mentioned in the introduction to Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), where he is alluded to familiarly as the "man" or personal servant of the author, who attended to his education, as was his wont. Jonson's patronage may account for the fact that Brome became the friend of Dekker, Fletcher, Ford, and Shirley; and in 1623 he

*Richard  
Brome*

<sup>23</sup> See R. F. Brinkley, *Nathan Field, the Actor-Playwright* (New Haven, 1928).

<sup>24</sup> Reprinted in a Mermaid Series volume, *Nero and Other Plays*, with introduction by A. W. Verity.

<sup>25</sup> Ed. C. L. Lockert (Lancaster, Pa., 1918).

<sup>26</sup> *Works of Richard Brome* (3v, 1873). See C. E. Andrews, *Richard Brome, a Study of His Life and Works* (1913).

had written a comedy, licensed but now lost, in collaboration with Jonson's son, Benjamin Jr. His name appears with Dekker's on the title-page of the interesting *Late Lancashire Witches* (1634), and he has claim to fifteen extant plays of his own, which are about as full of Jonsonian qualities as the plays of a mediocre dramatist could be.<sup>27</sup> Most of them are humor or intrigue comedies. They retained their popularity into the Restoration age and are still instructive as pictures of manners, and, though coarse-grained, are readable. *The Antipodes*<sup>28</sup> (1638) is a clever *tour de force* in which young Peregrine's bookish humor for travel-literature and various other humors are cured by a pretended voyage to the antipodes. There was a strain of romance in Brome, which rather increased in his later work. His best play is his last and his most romantic, *A Jovial Crew, or The Merry Beggars* (1641), which was acted very shortly before the closing of the theatres. It is, as the prologue well describes it, a play

Of fortune-tellers, damsels and their squires,  
Expos'd to strange adventures through the briars  
Of love and fate,

a play that still retains a great deal of Jonson, but is most suggestive of the Jonson of *The Metamorphosed Gipsies*, *The Sad Shepherd*, and the better scenes of *The New Inn*.

Shakerley  
Marmion

Shakerley Marmion<sup>29</sup> (1602-1639), an impoverished member of a distinguished family, after taking his M. A. at Oxford in 1624 and soldiering for a while in the Low Countries, pushed his literary fortunes with some success, but died prematurely as a result of service in the troop of horse which his friend, Sir John Suckling, raised for the campaign against the Scots that preluded the Civil Wars. He left a fine mythological poem, *Cupid and Psyche*<sup>30</sup> (1637) and three comedies of merit: *Holland's Leaguer* (1632), *A Fine Companion* (1633), and *The Antiquary* (c. 1635). They are amusingly written, with considerable display of classical learning and much Jonsonian reminiscence. The humors of the coward Captain Whibble (an imitation of Bobadill) in *A Fine Companion* and of the antiquary in the play of that name were long appreciated. Marmion will leave the modern reader with a favorable impression of his talents and of the cavalier society he wrote for. His first play is sordid enough in parts, but his sense of humor is true and his language graceful.

Thomas Nabbes<sup>31</sup> (c. 1605-c. 1641), a Worcestershire man of lowly origin, who matriculated at Exeter College, Oxford, in 1621 at the age of sixteen,

<sup>27</sup> For possible additions to the Brome canon see A. Harbage, "Elizabethan-Restoration Palimpsest," *MLR*, xxxv (1940). 304-309.

<sup>28</sup> Ed. G. P. Baker in Gayley, *Representative English Comedies*, III (1914).

<sup>29</sup> Marmion's *Dramatic Works* have been edited by J. Maidment and W. H. Logan (2v, 1875).

<sup>30</sup> Ed. G. Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, II (Oxford, 1906), pp. 1-60, and more recently by Alice Jones Nearing, *Cupid and Psyche, by Shakerley Marmion—A Critical Edition: with an Account of Marmion's Life and Works* (Philadelphia, 1944). See S. Maxwell, "An Addition to the First Idyl of Moschus," *AJP*, Lxiv (1943). 435-439.

<sup>31</sup> See A. H. Bullen, *The Works of Thomas Nabbes* (2v, 1887); and for discussion, C. Moore, *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Nabbes* (Menasha, Wis., 1918).

left a half-dozen plays of different sorts and a few bits of occasional verse, but hardly any other record of his existence. He is inferior to Marmion as a poet and to Brome as a dramatist, but he had ambition and a creditable desire to bear the Jonsonian torch into various fields. His long "moral masque," *Microcosmos* (1637), is only historically interesting, because of the new elaborateness of its stage effects and the effort to inflate Jonson's masque technique into something suggestive of the old morality play. His tragedy of *Hannibal and Scipio* (1635), introducing the popular figure of Sophonisba, covers so long a stretch of time and place that it falls apart between the acts and amounts virtually to a classical pageant; and his attempt at melodrama, *The Bride* (1638), is feebly constructed and very flatly written. It was in two earlier London comedies—*Covent Garden*, acted in 1632 and dedicated to Suckling, and *Tottenham Court*, acted in 1633—that Nabbes did his best work.<sup>32</sup> They tell a good deal of the life of the time and are amusing illustrations of the zeal with which the Caroline public served God and Mammon. Nabbes's good characters are prigs of the stamp that returned into vogue in the sentimental comedy of Queen Anne's age, while his plots teeter on the brink of Restoration licentiousness.

Thomas  
Nabbes

James Shirley<sup>33</sup> (1596-1666), though a very imitative dramatist, cannot, like those just discussed, be accounted for as simply a follower of Jonson. There are thirty-one extant plays by Shirley, more than by any contemporary except Fletcher and Shakespeare. Had not a famous act of Parliament in 1642 cut off his productivity at its height, there might have been many more, for Shirley was giving his public precisely what they wanted. It was a more limited public than Shakespeare's, confined practically to the royal court and the élite of like-minded cavaliers who patronized the private playhouses. The King's Company now depended upon their intimate performances at Blackfriars, and their great public theatre, the Globe on the Bankside, had lost caste. When some occasion required them to produce Shirley's *The Doubtful Heir* (1640) at the Globe, the dramatist wrote a prologue that is informingly contemptuous of middle-class taste:

James  
Shirley

All that the Prologue comes for is to say,  
Our author did not calculate this play  
For this meridian. The Bankside, he knows,  
Is far more skilful at the ebbs and flows  
Of water than of wit . . .  
No clown, no squibs, no devil in 't! Oh, now,  
You squirrels that want nuts, what will you do?  
Pray, do not crack the benches, and we may  
Hereafter fit *your* palates with a play.

<sup>32</sup> These two comedies and others by Marmion, Brome, and Shirley are discussed by Theodore Miles, "Place-Realism in a Group of Caroline Plays," *RES*, xviii (1942). 428-440.

<sup>33</sup> Shirley's *Dramatic Works and Poems* were edited by A. Dyce (6v, 1833). For discussion see A. H. Nason, *James Shirley, Dramatist, a Biographical and Critical Study* (1915); H. T. Parlin, *A Study in Shirley's Comedies of London Life* (Austin, 1914); R. S. Forsythe, *The Relations of Shirley's Plays to the Elizabethan Drama* (1914); A. C. Baugh, "Some New Facts about Shirley," *MLR*, xvii (1922). 228-235, and "Further Facts about James Shirley," *RES*, vii (1931). 62-66.

But you that can contract yourselves, and sit  
 As you were now in the Blackfriars pit,  
 And will not deaf us with lewd noise and tongues,  
 Because we have no heart to break our lungs,  
 Will pardon our vast stage and not disgrace  
 This play, meant for *your* persons, not the place.

King Charles took a personal interest in Shirley and collaborated more or less in his play, *The Gamester* (1633), of which, according to the well-known anecdote, the King later reported, "it was the best play he had seen for seven years." When the Earl of Strafford was maintaining viceregal pomp in Ireland (1636-1640), Shirley was brought to Dublin to advance the court prestige there,<sup>34</sup> his plays being, of course, produced in London also.

Under Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels since 1623, the censorship of plays had become almost a matter of court protocol,<sup>35</sup> and Shirley was the writer who best satisfied Herbert's ideals, as he testified in his words concerning *The Young Admiral* (1633):

The comedy called *The Young Admiral*, being free from oaths, profaneness, or obscenity, hath given me much delight and satisfaction in the reading, and may serve for a pattern to other poets, not only for the bettering of manners and language, but for the improvement of the quality [profession], which hath received some brushings of late.<sup>36</sup> When Mr. Shirley hath read this approbation, I know it will encourage him to pursue this beneficial and cleanly way of poetry; and when other poets hear and see his good success, I am confident they will imitate the original for their own credit, and make such copies in this harmless way as shall speak them masters in their art, at the first sight, to all judicious spectators . . . I have entered this allowance for direction to my successor, and for example to all poets that shall write after the date hereof.

Shirley was in truth a gentleman and a poet. Educated at Spenser's old school, the Merchant Taylors', and at both Oxford and Cambridge, he took Anglican orders and became headmaster of the grammar school at St. Albans, but was converted to Roman Catholicism and in 1625 set up as a playwright in London. He wrote almost every type of play except the chronicle history; masques, comedies, tragicomedies, and tragedies dropped with equal ease from his fluent pen. Except in fecundity, however, he is dwarfed by the "giant race" that stands behind him. He has been likened to the inheritor of an exhausted mine, and the reader of his well-bred and gracious dramas is likely to be haunted by echoes. His fine tragedy, *The Cardinal* (1641), for example, though doubtless independently suggested by the contemporary career of Richelieu in France, reminds one, to its cost, of *The Duchess of Malfi*; and another fine tragedy, *The Traitor* (1631), comes into disadvantageous comparison with *The Revenger's Tragedy* of Tourneur. His tragicomedies, though usually entertaining and noble in sentiment, are too

<sup>34</sup> See Allan H. Stevenson, "James Shirley and the Actors at the First Irish Theater," *MP*, XL (1942), 147-160.

<sup>35</sup> See J. Q. Adams, *The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert* (1917).

<sup>36</sup> Particularly from the *Histrio-Mastix* of William Prynne, published in this year 1633.

mild and too loosely constructed to hold the attention after the best work of Fletcher and Massinger, as any one will note who will read *The Coronation* (1635), which, though by Shirley, was printed in 1640 as "written by John Fletcher, Gent.," and included in the Beaumont-Fletcher Folio of 1679.

Shirley is most successful, on the whole, in pure comedy; and here, for all his sobriety and rectitude, his place is with the Restoration writers. The mock-trial scene between Depazzi and his servant Rogero in *The Traitor* (III. i) is entirely delightful. *The Lady of Pleasure* (1635) is really Restoration comedy in every respect except its date and possibly its scant modicum of social restraint. A still earlier comedy, *The Witty Fair One* (1628), has distinct forebodings of Wycherley, even to a character named Manly; while its chief figures, Aimwell and Fowler, resemble the errant heroes of Farquhar's *Beaux' Stratagem*, in more than name. The flatness that one observes in Shirley's serious work is hardly felt in his songs.<sup>37</sup> In this respect the old drama retained a high degree of freshness to the very end. *The Triumph of Peace*, which Shirley wrote and Inigo Jones produced in 1634, the year of *Comus*, is the most ingenious and elaborate, and not the least harmonious, of its kind; and for a later masque, *The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses*, Shirley wrote the surpassingly noble and prophetic lines that are the finest elegy on this doomed society:

The glories of our blood and state  
Are shadows, not substantial things.  
There is no armor against fate,  
Death lays his icy hand on kings.  
Sceptre and crown  
Must tumble down,  
And in the dust be equal made  
With the poor crooked scythe and spade...

The garlands wither on your brow;  
Then boast no more your mighty deeds.  
Upon Death's purple altar now  
See where the victor-victim bleeds.  
Your heads must come  
To the cold tomb.  
Only the actions of the just  
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.

Along with Shirley should be mentioned two heterogeneous dramatists of fair productivity and some poetic grace, Robert Davenport<sup>38</sup> and Henry Glapthorne.<sup>39</sup> Davenport is first mentioned in 1624 in licensing entries by Herbert, his best-known play, *The City Nightcap*, being one of those presented in that year. His tragedy, *King John and Matilda*, harks back to the

Davenport  
and Glap-  
thorne

<sup>37</sup> See *The Poems of James Shirley*, ed. Ray L. Armstrong (1941).

<sup>38</sup> See A. H. Bullen, *The Works of Robert Davenport* (1890).

<sup>39</sup> See *The Plays and Poems of Henry Glapthorne*, ed. J. Pearson (2v, 1874).



Robert, Earl of Huntingdon plays of Chettle and Munday in its theme and is rather old-fashioned in its treatment. His *New Trick to Cheat the Devil*, which was printed in 1639, ranks with Glapthorne's *The Hollander*, written in 1635, and *Wit in a Constable*, written in 1639, among the better examples of late Caroline comedy. Glapthorne's tragedy, *Argalus and Parthenia*, is weakly dramatized out of the *Arcadia*, and his tragicomedy, *The Lady's Privilege*, with an aristocratic Genoese setting, carries the love-and-honor theme to absurd lengths. Perhaps his most interesting play is the tragedy, *Albertus Wallenstein*, acted in 1639 and based on the atrocity which had occurred at Eger five years before. It is by no means equal to Schiller, the love scenes being unreal and the treatment of history cheaply sensational, but it contains a good variant of the humorous soldier type in Colonel Newman.

Jonson was imitated by his friend and patron, the Earl of Newcastle, in *The Variety* (c. 1639) and *The Country Captain*, probably with the assistance of Shirley; and by Thomas Killigrew (1612-1683) in a similar comedy of intrigue, *The Parson's Wedding*. Both these writers are interesting links between the Caroline stage and that of the Restoration. In the same style, but of a better quality, are *The Ordinary* (c. 1635) by Jonson's "son," William Cartwright, and *The City Match* by Jasper Mayne, both written by clerics of Christ Church, Oxford, and members of Charles I's entourage; while at the very end of the period young Abraham Cowley appeared briefly and thinly as a comic writer with his *Guardian* (1642). Nearly all the plays mentioned here were performed before the King and Queen as well as at the private playhouses, and the connection between the theatre and court was so close at this time that the personal tastes of the sovereigns had unusual influence on dramatic developments.<sup>40</sup> The taste of Charles I's consort, Henrietta Maria, for histrionic pleasures gave wicked point to Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix* in 1633, when she herself acted in Walter Montague's insipid pastoral, *The Shepherd's Paradise*. She seems to have cared most for song, Arcadianism, Platonic love, and wild adventure; and there quickly arose a body of amateur dramatists eager to provide these things. No great plays resulted, but the general course of development was affected in at least two ways: in the spread of critical prejudice against "low" characters and situations, and the introduction of more elaborate scenery and costuming than the ordinary stage had hitherto employed. The professional playwrights soon found their amateur rivals a nuisance, and Brome in his *Court Beggar*, as early as 1632, sardonically proposes

That no plays may be admitted to the stage but of their making who profess or endeavor to live by the quality: that no courtiers, divines, students at law, lawyers' clerks, tradesmen or prentices be allowed to write 'em; nor the works of any lay-poet whatsoever to be received to the stage, though freely given unto the actors, nay, though any such poet should give a sum of money with his play.

<sup>40</sup> The subject and the various dramatists concerned are very well treated by Alfred Harbage, *Cavalier Drama* (1936). The texts of many of the plays are to be found (badly edited) in the Hazlitt-Dodsley *Select Collection of Old English Plays* (15v, 1874-76).

The visit of the King and Queen to Oxford in August, 1636, brought the courtly drama into special prominence, William Strode's *Floating Island* and William Cartwright's *Royal Slave* being presented on that occasion with immense pomp and notoriety. Strode is a lyric poet of some worth,<sup>41</sup> but his allegorical drama was too insubstantial for even the Queen's taste. The tragicomedy of *The Royal Slave*, however, dealing with noble Greeks and Persians, was a great and lasting success. It was equipped with gorgeous Persian costumes and eight "appearances" or pictorial scene-sets that became the talk of the fashionable world.<sup>42</sup>

The most important of this group of dramatists was William Davenant (1606-1668),<sup>43</sup> who, besides producing a number of moderately successful plays in the Shirley vein, captured fame by his tendentious court plays, *Love and Honour* (1634) and *The Platonic Lovers* (1635). He was closely paralleled by Thomas Killigrew<sup>44</sup> in *The Prisoners*, *Claricilla*, and *The Princess* (c. 1635-36), and by Lodowick Carlell (1602-1675) in *The Deserving Favorite* (1629), *Arviragus and Philicia* (1636), and *The Passionate Lovers* (1638). These three writers, with whom other courtiers like Sir John Suckling<sup>45</sup> and Sir William Berkeley should be associated, lived to profit by their cavalier loyalty and grace the Restoration stage. William Habington's *Queen of Aragon*, acted at court in 1640 and later at Blackfriars, is one of the best of this numerous category. Its offers the perfect tribute to the Queen in its central character, who is the worthy object of universal love, and in her lovers presents valiant gentlemen of astonishing magnanimity. The verse is good, the plot interesting, and the dénouement both unexpected and sentimental.<sup>46</sup>

*Davenant  
and Killigrew*

The plays of the five years that followed Jonson's death in 1637 were not lacking in a kind of merit, and certainly not in quantity, but they were severely limited in scope and bore the mark of intellectual death. On literary grounds there can be no complaint against the drastic act of the Puritan Parliament, September 2, 1642:

*The Closing  
of the  
Theatres*

Whereas . . . the distracted estate of England, threatened with a cloud of blood by a civil war call[s] for all possible means to appease and avert the wrath of God . . . it is therefore thought fit and ordained by the Lords and Commons in this Parliament assembled that, while these said causes and set times of humiliation do continue, public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne.

It brought to a formal close the richest flowering of English drama, which had lasted for a time rather shorter than the period from the first play of Aeschylus to the last of Euripides, and which has had no other parallel.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>41</sup> See Bertram Dobell, *The Poetical Works of William Strode, 1600-1645* (1907).

<sup>42</sup> Cartwright's *Comedies, Tragi-Comedies with Other Poems* were posthumously published in 1651. See below, ch. xi.

<sup>43</sup> See A. Harbage, *Sir William Davenant, Poet Venturer* (Philadelphia, 1935); A. H. Nethercot, *Sir William Davenant* (Chicago, 1938).

<sup>44</sup> See A. Harbage, *Thomas Killigrew, Cavalier Dramatist* (Philadelphia, 1930).

<sup>45</sup> See below, ch. xi. Suckling died in 1642, and Berkeley (d. 1677) left but one play, *The Lost Lady* (1638).

<sup>46</sup> For Habington's nondramatic work see below, ch. xii.

<sup>47</sup> See L. M. Watt, *Attic and Elizabethan Tragedy* (1908).

## VI

### Seventeenth-Century Prose: I. Bacon and the Prose of Utility

To suppose that all prose writers of the early seventeenth century wrote like Sir Thomas Browne and Milton would be an instance of *pseudodoxia epidemica*.<sup>1</sup> The writers considered in the present chapter were reacting against the mannered, ornamented style of Lyly and Sidney. They formed their prose into an instrument of greater utility and precision and achieved no special elegance, with the exception of some of the Bible-translators, Ben Jonson, and Bacon, all of whom were capable of turning austerity itself into a garment of beauty. One of the features of the change from the Tudor to the Stuart period is that prose advanced itself into a number of provinces of literature where verse had previously ruled. Thus the prose "character" succeeded to the poetical satire and epigram, the essay to the eclogue; and in the work of such long-lived and prolific writers as Nicholas Breton, Dekker, and Heywood it is roughly true that their Elizabethan output is predominantly verse and their Jacobean output mainly prose. Dekker's *Bellman of London* (1608), *Gull's Hornbook* (1609), and his series of plague pamphlets, Heywood's *Apology for Actors* (1612) and *Gunaikeion* (1624) show the shift to realism and social analysis, though Dekker and Heywood remained at heart Elizabethan.<sup>2</sup>

#### Letter Writers

The expansion of literary and semi-literary prose in the seventeenth century is well illustrated by the personal letters that have survived. There are doubtless no better letters from the previous age than those of Shakespeare's close contemporary, Philip Gawdy<sup>3</sup> (1562-1617), the great majority of which date from Queen Elizabeth's reign. Gawdy was well-connected and intelligent, he had some humor, and he had interesting experiences, which included reasonable intimacy with the Queen and her court, member-

<sup>1</sup> For generous and well selected examples of seventeenth-century prose through its entire range, see R. P. T. Coffin and A. M. Witherspoon, *A Book of 17th Century Prose* (1929), which has an admirable introduction, and Cecil A. Moore and Douglas Bush, *English Prose, 1600-1660* (1930). The history of the early part of the century is covered by David Mathew, *The Jacobean Age* (1938), and the intellectual movements by Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background: Studies in the Thought of the Age in relation to Poetry and Religion* (1934). See also Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660* (Oxford, 1945).

<sup>2</sup> See M. L. Hunt, *Thomas Dekker, a Study* (1911), ch. vii; A. M. Clark, *Thomas Heywood, Playwright and Miscellanist* (Oxford, 1931), ch. v.

<sup>3</sup> See *Letters of Philip Gawdy of West Harling, Norfolk, and of London to Various Members of his Family, 1579-1616*, ed. I. H. Jeayes (Roxburghe Club, 1906). For discussion of the letters of Richard Brakenbury, dating from the same period, see L. C. John, "Elizabethan Letter-writer," *PQ*, xxiv (1945). 106-113.

ship in the House of Commons, and service with Sir Richard Grenville on the last voyage of the *Revenge* with its aftermath of captivity in Portugal. The preservation of his correspondence is a blessing, but perusal of it shows how wholly practical Gawdy's idea of a letter is. He seems restricted to four stereotyped themes; viz., (1) expression of humble duty toward those who might do him worldly good; (2) pushing of legal and courtly suits; (3) transmission of London rumors about politics, high society, and the outer world to his news-starved rural relatives; (4) the everlasting concern of discovering in the city and shipping home by carrier all the exotic articles that Elizabethan gentlefolk required—"sending down my father's foot-cloth," or his plumbtrees, for Elizabethan country-dwellers went to London even for trees. Any reader will note the advance in literary value in the charming letters that Serjeant John Hoskyns wrote from London to his wife and daughter-in-law in the West between 1601 and 1629.<sup>4</sup> Hoskyns, to be sure, was a wit, and a little of a poet in both English and Latin; but the change is largely due to the spread of peace and peaceful traffic in James's reign and to the diffusion of intelligence that resulted. The change is most marked, of course, in the 479 letters of the prince of letter-writers of the age, John Chamberlain<sup>5</sup> (1554-1628). Chamberlain was born before Gawdy, but his earliest extant letter is dated June 11, 1597, and it is hardly possible that letters of their quality could or would have been written at an earlier period.<sup>6</sup>

Philip  
Gawdy

John  
Hoskyns

John Cham-  
berlain

King James I of England (1566-1625), like his ancestor, James I of Scotland, fancied himself as a poet and had literary ambitions for his country. It is possible that if fate had not brought him to the thrones of both kingdoms, the Scottish literary language might have become as different from English as Portuguese is from Spanish. Such was James's evident desire during thirty-six years of his life. Amid the turmoil of his Scottish reign he had visions of Edinburgh as a new Athens and of himself, like the King of Navarre in Shakespeare's play, erecting there a little academe with Alexander Montgomerie<sup>7</sup> as his chief guide, colleague, and Berowne. He wrote a consider-

King  
James's  
English

<sup>4</sup> See L. B. Osborn, *The Life, Letters, and Writings of John Hoskyns, 1566-1638* (New Haven, 1937). Hoskyns, a member of the Middle Temple, London, and like Gawdy a member of Parliament, was a friend of both Jonson and Donne, with the latter of whom he had been contemporary at New College, Oxford. He left, besides his verses and letters, an important rhetorical work, *Directions for Speech and Style*, edited by Miss Osborn, *op. cit.*, and separately by H. H. Hudson (Princeton, 1935).

<sup>5</sup> See *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, edited with an introduction by N. E. McClure (2v, Philadelphia, American Philosophical Soc., 1939).

<sup>6</sup> Other important collections of seventeenth-century letters are those of the Sidney family, edited by Arthur Collins (2v, 1746) as *Letters and Memorials of State*; those of Sir Tobie Matthew (1577-1655), printed as *A Collection of Letters* (1660; see A. H. Mathew and A. Calthrop, *The Life of Sir Tobie Matthew, Bacon's Alter Ego*, 1907); those of Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639; ed. L. P. Smith, 2v, Oxford, 1907); and *The Oxinden Letters, 1607-1642*, ed. Dorothy Gardiner (1933).

<sup>7</sup> Montgomerie (c. 1556-c. 1610) was the chief Scottish poet between Sir David Lindsay and Drummond of Hawthornden. His *Poems* are edited by George Stevenson (*Scottish Text Soc.*, 1910). He was a close companion of the young King, and besides his long poem, *The Cherry and the Slae* (ed. H. H. Wood, 1937), wrote sonnets with the same Spenserian rime scheme that James habitually employed.

able amount of more than capable verse in his native dialect<sup>8</sup> and promulgated, at the age of eighteen, *The Reulis and Cautelis to Be Observit and Eschewit in Scottis Poesie*. His *Demonology, in Form of a Dialogue*<sup>9</sup> (1597) and his most important prose work, the *Basilikon Doron* (King's Gift) addressed to his infant son (1599), are in less vehement Scots; but *A Counterblast to Tobacco* (1604), with which he surprisingly saluted his London subjects in the year of his arrival in that city, is in careful Southern English, as are his political writings of this period.<sup>10</sup>

The King's prose style is not a bad one, as can be seen from the following passage of the *Counterblast* ridiculing the alleged virtues of tobacco:

It cures the gout in the feet, and (which is miraculous) in that very instant when the smoke thereof, as light, flies up into the head, the virtue thereof, as heavy, runs down to the little toe. It helps all sorts of agues. It makes a man sober that was drunk. It refreshes a weary man, and yet makes a man hungry. Being taken when they go to bed, it makes one sleep soundly, and yet being taken when a man is sleepy and drowsy, it will, as they say, awake his brain and quicken his understanding. . . . Here in England it is refined, and will not deign to cure here any other than cleanly and gentlemanly diseases. O omnipotent power of *Tobacco*!

He is not without humor or argumentative subtlety, but his taste is for a plain style, weighty with learning, but unencumbered with Renaissance ornament.<sup>11</sup> In the *Basilikon Doron* he bids his son, "Use a natural and plain form not faired [painted] with artifice," and a modern biographer characterizes his way of writing as "that style which, shrewd and effective enough . . . rises nowhere to any greatness of imagination or any sudden passion of spiritual truth."<sup>12</sup> Such in fact was the predominant character of English prose during his reign. It is the style of the great translations of this era and transcends itself in the Bible of 1611, through which King James's name has a place in the history of the language with Shakespeare's and with Bacon's.

The  
Translators

It is instructive to compare the most prized of the great Elizabethan versions of the classics, North's version of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* (1579), with the translation of Plutarch's *Morals* that Philemon Holland (1552-1637) published in 1603. Holland's materials are more realistic and, one may say, sociological, and his style, though it flows majestically enough, quite avoids

<sup>8</sup> I.e., *The Essays of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poesy* (Edinburgh, 1684); *His Majesty's Poetical Exercises* (Edinburgh, 1591). See A. F. Westcott, *New Poems by James I of England* (1911), which has a valuable introduction.

<sup>9</sup> King James's *Demonology* is a now out-dated argument for the existence of demons, witches, and the like, written in reply to the skeptical and remarkably broad-minded *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584) by Reginald Scot (c. 1538-1599). Scot's fine and readable book is reprinted with an Introduction by Montagu Summers (1930).

<sup>10</sup> See C. H. McIlwain, *The Political Works of James I* (Cambridge, Mass., 1918); C. J. Sisson, "King James I of England as Poet and Political Writer," in *Seventeenth Century Studies presented to Sir Herbert Grierson* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 47-63; D. H. Wilson, "James I and his Literary Assistants," *HLQ*, viii (1944), 35-57.

<sup>11</sup> His attitude is well expressed in a sonnet to his friend and compatriot, Sir William Alexander (see above, Part II, ch. VII), rebuking him for writing "harsh verses after the English fashion," i.e., in the metaphysical style. See Westcott, *op. cit.*, pp. 37 f., lxxxix, xc.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Williams, *James I* (1934), p. 145.

the clang and the romantic idiosyncrasies of North.<sup>13</sup> The King James Bible (1611) is the perfect and final thing it is because of the genius its translators showed for compromise and lucidity. It would need a volume to do it justice, but comparison of any single chapter with its counterpart in the Bishops' Bible of 1572 will show the new grace of unambiguous suavity that Jacobean prose had created.<sup>14</sup>

Jonson's remarkable little book, *Timber*, printed posthumously,<sup>15</sup> is an informing example of the way seventeenth-century prose shaped itself upon the classics. It consists to a very great extent of paraphrases or actual translations of passages which Jonson found in Seneca the elder, Quintilian, and other favorite Latin authors.<sup>16</sup> There is no evidence that he intended to publish it, and certainly none that he intended to conceal his borrowings. What the book shows is that he has set himself to express his judgments of modern matters in English sentences of completely Roman compactness and economy. He has greatly succeeded, often improving upon the conciseness of his models. The fact that the following dictum on style owes its idea and most of its words to the Latin of Vives hardly makes it less Jonsonian or less perfect an example of English structure:

Ben  
Jonson's  
Discoveries

The congruent and harmonious fitting of parts in a sentence hath almost the fastening and force of knitting and connection; as in stones well squared, which will rise strong a great way without mortar. Periods are beautiful when they are not too long; for so they have their strength too, as in a pike or javelin.

And it would be rather absurd to discount Jonson's perfect tributes to Shakespeare and Bacon because his care was to build into them many of the phrases Seneca had used of other men. Bacon would have known how to value these words about himself:

No man ever spake more neatly, more pressly [concisely], more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered. No member of his speech but consisted of his own graces . . . The fear of every man that heard him was lest he should make an end.

This was to praise him after the high Roman fashion, and it is this frugal Latin style that Bacon also illuminates.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Besides the *Morals*, which is dedicated to King James, Holland translated Livy (1600), Pliny (1601), Suetonius (1606), Ammianus Marcellinus (1609), and Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (1632). See H. B. Lathrop, *Translations from the Classics into English, 1477-1620* (Madison, Wis., 1933); H. Silvette, *Catalogue of the Works of Philemon Holland, 1600-1940* (Charlottesville, 1940).

<sup>14</sup> See B. F. Westcott, *A General View of the History of the English Bible* (3ed., 1905), pp. 255-278; and the references in Part I, ch. vi, above.

<sup>15</sup> The title in the first edition is: *Timber: or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter, as They Have Flowed out of His Daily Reading* (1641). See M. Castelain, *Ben Jonson, Discoveries, a Critical Edition* (Paris, 1906); F. E. Schelling's earlier ed. (Boston, 1892); and Herford and Simpson, *Ben Jonson*, II, 437-451 (Oxford, 1925).

<sup>16</sup> See J. E. Spingarn, "The Sources of Ben Jonson's *Discoveries*," *MP*, II (1905), 451-460; P. Simpson, "Tanquam Explorator: Jonson's Method in the *Discoveries*," *MLR*, II (1907), 201-210.

<sup>17</sup> Henry Peacham's curious medley, *The Complete Gentleman* (1622; ed. G. S. Gordon, Oxford, 1906), may be mentioned here. Peacham (1576-c. 1644) was a schoolmaster, traveler, draftsman, painter, angler, antiquary, and something of a herald. All these interests assert



The essays of Francis Bacon<sup>18</sup> (1561-1626) are the best picture of his mind. They include some of his earliest and some of his latest writing, and were worked at during the whole of his active life. The term *essay* was, of course, borrowed from Montaigne, whose *Essais* had appeared in France in 1580 and 1588 and were published in John Florio's English translation in 1603.<sup>19</sup> They had been promptly imitated by Sir William Cornwallis, whose collections, printed in 1600, 1610, and 1616 deserve a place in the history of the type.<sup>20</sup>

Bacon's  
Essays

Bacon adheres throughout to Montaigne's conception of the essay as something more economical and less dogmatic than the quasi-Platonic dialogue, as represented by Spenser's *View of Ireland*, or the formal discourse as seen in Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*; but in one important respect his essays are totally unlike Montaigne's. Where the French writer, one of the most charming egoists in literature, is mainly concerned with his individual opinions, Bacon is concerned mainly with the type of reader he is addressing. This is not at all the average human being. Bacon has nothing to say to women, or tradesmen, or artists, or professional scholars, or gentlemen of leisure like Montaigne. He is writing for the young men of his own class and tradition, the Elizabethan or Jacobean youth of strenuous ambition and large opportunity, intent upon the completest self-realization in public life. He does not tell these readers how to be more happy, more attractive, or even more moral; he tells them how to be more efficient, for he assumes as naturally as Cecil Rhodes did that any chosen student would "esteem the performance of public duty his highest aim." This is true whether he writes of travel or friendship, discourse, gardens, marriage and single life, or

themselves in his little book without blending. He is factual and somewhat pompous, but has a redeeming store of anecdotes. His work was popular, and his title very likely suggested that of Walton's classic. See D. T. Starnes, "Elyot's *Governour* and Peacham's *Compleat Gentleman*," *MLR*, xxii (1927), 319-322; and, for a comprehensive account of courtesy literature, John Mason, *Gentle Folk in the Making* (Philadelphia, 1935).

<sup>18</sup> The standard edition of Bacon is that of J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis, and D. D. Heath (14v, 1857-74). This includes *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon* by Spedding (7v, 1861-74), of which *The Life and Times of Francis Bacon* (2v, 1878) is an abridgment. Spedding's work is in some respects not likely to be superseded. Modern lives include *Sir Francis Bacon, the First Modern Mind* (1930) by "Byron Steel" (a brief and readable sketch); M. Sturt, *Francis Bacon* (1932); C. Williams, *Bacon* (1933). Useful criticism of Bacon and certain writers will be found in W. G. Crane's *Wit and Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (1937), ch. x, "The Essay and the Character," pp. 132-161. See also E. N. S. Thompson, *The Seventeenth-Century English Essay* (Iowa City, 1926).

<sup>19</sup> See J. Zeitlin, "The Development of Bacon's Essays, with Special Reference to the Question of Montaigne's Influence upon Them," *JEGP*, xxvii (1928), 496-519.

<sup>20</sup> Though a number of Cornwallis's essays have the same titles as Bacon's there is little other similarity. The best known perhaps is the long one, in the 1616 collection, on *The Praise of King Richard III*, Cornwallis's claim to which has been recently questioned; see W. G. Zeeveld, "A Tudor Defense of Richard III," *PMLA*, lv (1940), 946-957. Sir William had a leaning toward flippancy and paradox, but could not often make them amusing. See W. L. MacDonald, "The Earliest English Essayists," *ESL*, lxxv (1929), 20-52; and P. B. Whitt, "New Light on Sir William Cornwallis the Essayist," *RES*, vii (1932), 155-169. Don C. Allen has edited the *Essayes* (Baltimore, 1946). Another early essayist is Robert Johnson (the reputed author also of two of the earliest books on the Virginia Colony: *Nova Britannia*, 1609, and *The New Life of Virginia*, 1612). Johnson's *Essaies, or rather Imperfect Offers* (1601) had four editions by 1638. He was followed by Daniel Tuvill ("D. T."), whose two series, *Essaies Politicke and Morall* (1608) and *Essaies Morall and Theological* (1609), are heavily ethical and rather overweighted with allusions to Tacitus and other historians.

adversity; and the austere creed, which he nowhere deigns to argue or expound, gives them all a coherence and a certain uplift. Of moral integrity Bacon possessed little enough. His callous ingratitude to his patron Essex and his malfeasance in office can hardly be condoned. Pope has described him as "the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind,"<sup>21</sup> and Macaulay as the man "whom the wise Queen Elizabeth distrusted and the foolish King James honored and advanced." In private life he was self-centered, to say the best of him, and his literary work is entirely incompatible with that of such men as Shakespeare and Spenser; but he possessed a remarkable intellectual integrity, a luminosity of mental truth, which gives his best work a tonic and exhilarating, though quite unwarming, glow.

The stylistic development in the *Essays* is very interesting. The first edition, in 1597, contained ten, totaling about six thousand words, a scant hour's reading; the final edition of 1625 contained fifty-nine. There was no recasting or change of fundamental opinion, but the sentences were polished and statements were made more concrete by citation of examples, illustrative anecdotes, and quotations; and naturally the conception of an essay grows larger. Three essays on related subjects show the development. The one entitled *Of Expense*, in its 1597 form, contains about 240 words; it is literally an *essai*, a mere collection of general statements in aphoristic form. As later elaborated, the same essay has over 400 words, the added matter being four observations from worldly experience. The essay *Of Riches*, first printed in 1612 and later expanded, is more ambitious, consisting of an analytical discussion in about 1100 words of (a) the value of riches, (b) means of attainment, (c) their uses. Finally, *Of Usury*, first found in the 1625 edition, is a formal and carefully argued little treatise on an economic problem.<sup>22</sup> It is to be observed that nearly all the essays which directly treat of public life (*Great Place, Nobility, Empire, Counsel, Wisdom for a Man's Self, Seeming Wise, True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates, Ambition, and Judicature*) first appeared in the middle group of essays, dated between 1607 and 1612. At this time Bacon was within sight of his own goal, after years of waiting. In 1607 he became Solicitor General, in 1613 Attorney General, in 1618 Lord Chancellor and Baron Verulam.

In the *Essays* Bacon says very little of scholarship, though that was one of the main passions of his life. He made amends in the *Advancement of Learning* (1605), which is very likely the noblest tract on education ever written by an Englishman.<sup>23</sup> It is addressed as a kind of coronation gift to the new king, James, and is written in a somewhat richer style than the *Essays*. The first book deals with the praise of knowledge, challenging the

Bacon's Advancement of Learning

<sup>21</sup> *An Essay on Man*, iv. 282.

<sup>22</sup> In the 1625 edition for the first time, the simple title, *Essays* is expanded into *Essays, or Counsels, Civil and Moral*.

<sup>23</sup> See R. S. Crane, "The Relation of Bacon's Essays to his Program for the Advancement of Learning," in *Schelling Anniversary Papers* (1928), pp. 87-105, the same author's introduction to *The English Familiar Essay*, ed. W. F. Bryan and R. S. Crane (Boston, 1916), and the first two essays in *Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson* (Oxford, 1938): G. Bullough, "Bacon and the Defence of Learning," and R. Metz, "Bacon's Part in the Intellectual Movement of His Time."

The New  
Atlantis

various prejudices and errors which discredit it in popular opinion, and rising to heights of eloquence suggestive of the great passages in Milton's *Areopagitica*. The second book is a survey of learning, analytical, encyclopedic, and inductive in method, laying broad and deep foundations for a national culture. *The New Atlantis*, left unfinished at Bacon's death and published in 1627, is a romantic and imaginative complement to the *Advancement of Learning*. In the manner of More's *Utopia* he describes a fictitious land where his principles of collaborative research have been put into effect in a great agricultural and mechanical experiment station called Solomon's House. Out of this book came much of the inspiration for the Royal Society a generation later.<sup>24</sup>

The  
Wisdom  
of the  
Ancients

Another work of romantic cast and great charm is *The Wisdom of the Ancients* (1619), dedicated to Bacon's "foster mother," the University of Cambridge. Here he resorted to the Renaissance fashion of symbolical interpretation of classic myths to develop many of the same thoughts which appear in the *Essays*. This was one of the works which Shelley had in mind when he asserted, "Lord Bacon was a poet." The section on "Pan, or Nature" has a passage that anticipates the findings of modern biology:

This biform figure also represents the participation of one species with another: for there appear to be no simple natures, but all participate or consist of two: thus man has somewhat of the brute, the brute somewhat of the plant, the plant somewhat of the mineral; so that all natural bodies have really two faces, or consist of a superior and an inferior species.

The  
History of  
Henry VII

*The History of the Reign of King Henry VII* (1622) is a landmark in historical writing and a reflection of the psychological curiosity of the early seventeenth century. Essentially a study of the mind and character of a man whose unheroic, inflexible, and efficient personality resembled Bacon's own, it is attempted on a scale, and with a mental subtlety, and in an English style that no previous chronicler had approached. It has some kinship with the "character" writings, Burton, and Walton's lives, but very little with the histories composed in Queen Elizabeth's reign. Bacon's small concern for institutional and sociological matters is apparent in one sentence:

This year also the king called his Parliament, where many laws were made of a more private and vulgar nature than ought to detain the reader of an history.

Robert  
Burton,  
The Anatomy  
of  
Melancholy

With no pretension of style or novelty of subject matter, and no real coherence of argument or narrative, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) by a lonely and cross-grained scholar, Robert Burton<sup>25</sup> (1576-1640), became

<sup>24</sup> James Harrington's *Oceana* (1656), written in opposition to Hobbes's *Leviathan*, likewise deals with the ideal commonwealth, though superficially. It is a work of considerable political, but no great literary, importance. See R. Koebner, "*Oceana*," *ESR*, LXVIII (1934). 358-396.

<sup>25</sup> Modern editions of *The Anatomy of Melancholy* include those of F. Dell and P. Jordan-Smith (2v, 1927; condensed reissue in one volume, 1929); H. Jackson (3v, 1932; Everyman's Library). Vol. 1, Part 3, pp. 155-246, of the Oxford Bibliographical Society's *Proceedings and Papers* (1926) is devoted to Burton. See also P. Jordan-Smith, *Bibliographia Burtoniana, a Study of Robert Burton's "The Anatomy of Melancholy"* (Stanford Univ., 1931).

one of the most popular works of its age and one of the world's great books. It came from the same Oxford background out of which, a little over forty years before, had come *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, and Burton's volume might as well have borne Lyly's title as its own. The only thing either book proves is the social value of a broad classical education. The difference between them measures the change produced by a generation of "malcontent" literature. Lyly has in mind the easy successes of the "brave courtier" of Spenserian tradition; Burton begins with a passage strikingly like Hamlet's melancholy speech, "What a piece of work is a man!" Though draped over an intricate framework of "partitions," "sections," "members," and "subsections," imitating the scientific parlance of the day, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* can most simply be regarded as a great collection of essays on man's dissatisfaction with the world and ways to mitigate it. Bacon is the most obvious model for the studiously plain style and the habit of continually starting from a Latin quotation or classical anecdote. The subsections on the nature of spirits (I. 2. 1. 2), on "love of learning or overmuch study" (I. 2. 3. 15), the "digression of the air" (II. 2. 3), and the one on marriage and single life (III. 2. 5. 5) are among the best examples of the essay of whimsical learning, long drawn out.

Burton bettered Bacon's instruction by vastly multiplying the learned allusions and adding to their effectiveness by his amusing translations, and by often lowering his style into a serio-comic monologue, which became a delight and pattern for both Sterne and Lamb. The book opens dully enough with a long letter of the feigned author, Democritus Junior, to the reader and a restatement of the old psychology, treated previously by Sir Thomas Elyot<sup>26</sup> and so many others; but it grows steadily in interest. The third, and last, "partition" on love-melancholy and religious melancholy becomes, among other things, a digest of the best stories in the world, from the Alexandrian Greek romancers like Achilles Tatius (whom Burton's brother William had translated)<sup>27</sup> to the works of such moderns as Spenser, Marlowe, Jonson, and Shakespeare, "an elegant poet of ours." If all the Elizabethan literature were lost, it would be possible to put together a fairly good account of the chief writers from Burton's quotations and allusions.<sup>28</sup> *The Anatomy of Melancholy* has, moreover, been a perfect arsenal for poets in search of plots. To mention just two examples, Ford, a few years after the book was published, found there the source of his early play, *The Lover's Melancholy* (1629);<sup>29</sup> and two centuries later Keats found the source of *Lamia*.

Burton was a clergyman and held livings at different times in various counties of England; but from his election as "student" of Christ Church in 1599 till his death there forty years later his chief residence was his

<sup>26</sup> See above, Part I, ch. II.

<sup>27</sup> Printed in 1597; ed. S. Gaselee and H. F. B. Brett-Smith (Oxford, 1923).

<sup>28</sup> See H. J. Gottlieb, *Robert Burton's Knowledge of English Poetry* (1937).

<sup>29</sup> See G. F. Sensabaugh, "Burton's Influence on Ford's *The Lover's Melancholy*," *SP*, XXXIII (1936). 545-571.

bachelor quarters in that college. It was the fellows' talk in the common room and the racier badinage of the Oxford bargemen on the Isis that developed his views of life and humor, and he drew heavily upon the books at the Bodleian for his recondite knowledge. He published nothing except the *Anatomy*,<sup>30</sup> which made a fortune for its Oxford printer, but hardly affected the placid life of Burton, who was buried three centuries ago in the Christ Church Cathedral, with a punning Latin epitaph that he would have appreciated.<sup>31</sup>

Thomas  
Fuller

Thomas Fuller<sup>32</sup> (1608-1661), was born in the same year as Milton, and in the same village as Dryden—Aldwinkle in Northamptonshire, where his father was rector of one of the parishes. He was nearly a quarter-century older than Dryden, and his very slight career as a poet ends, in merit as in time, in a *Panegyric on His Majesty's Happy Return*, 1660, at about the point where Dryden's begins.<sup>33</sup> Yet Dryden is the man of the seventeenth century whom Fuller most resembles. They are alike in their engagingly broad humanity, tolerance, and common sense. Whereas Dryden is vastly more the poet, Fuller is somewhat more the wit and social critic. Receiving his M. A. degree at Cambridge at the early age of twenty, Fuller entered the church and became one of the most popular preachers of his time, as well as one of the most popular writers. His first characteristic publication was *The History of the Holy War* (1639). Unlike Bunyan's allegory of similar title,<sup>34</sup> this is a straightforward chronicle of events in Palestine during the Crusades; it is a learned and exact book, but is already marked by Fuller's mannerisms. Thus he explains the failure of maps to show all the places mentioned (Book II, chapter 2): "for some of them were such poor places, that they were ashamed to appear in a map, and fall so much under a Geographer's notice that they fall not under it;" or, with reference to the quarrel between Richard I and the French king, he remarks (Book III, chapter 6): "The best way to keep great princes together is to keep them asunder, accommodating their business by ambassadors, lest the meeting

<sup>30</sup> Burton wrote an amusing Latin comedy, *Philosophaster*, acted at Christ Church in 1617. It was first printed in 1862, and again, with an English transl., by P. Jordan-Smith (Stanford Univ., 1931).

<sup>31</sup> Among the most influential writers of argumentative prose in this period were two friends of Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland: the "ever memorable" John Hales (1584-1656) and William Chillingworth (1602-1644). Both are masters of lucid English, marked by learning and good sense, and strong without adornment. Hales, an Oxford don who retired to spend most of his long life as a schoolmaster at Eton, and who is famous as one of the early encomiasts of Shakespeare, is the more readable today. See his *Golden Remains* (published in 1659) and his *Works*, ed. D. Dalrymple (3v, Glasgow, 1765). Chillingworth's *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation* (1638) went through many editions and was long a bulwark of Anglican theology.

<sup>32</sup> Charles Lamb's *Specimens from the Writings of Fuller the Church Historian* (1811) began the appreciation of Fuller in the nineteenth century. S. Gibson's *Bibliography of Thomas Fuller* (Oxford, 1934) is excellent. See also E. N. S. Thompson, "A Representative Man of Letters," in *Literary Byways of the Renaissance* (New Haven, 1924), pp. 173-183.

<sup>33</sup> Compare Dryden's *Astraea Redux* (1660) and *Panegyric on Charles II's coronation* (1661). Fuller's first published work was *David's Heinous Sin, Hearty Repentance, Heavy Punishment* (1631), a long poem in an unmusical alteration of rime royal. The method is rather like that of Quarles's biblical poems, and the theme happens to cover the same incidents as Peele's play, *David and Bethsabe*. Fuller's poems were reprinted by A. B. Grosart (1868).

<sup>34</sup> *The Holy War* (1682).



of their own persons part their affections." It is easy to understand that Fuller's style pained lovers of clerical dignity and prose decorum in his own day as much as it later pleased Charles Lamb. It certainly made his books sell, large in size and antiquarian in content though they mainly are.<sup>35</sup>

Fuller's next book was *The Holy and Profane States*<sup>36</sup> (1642), a miscellany which contains, among other things, about three dozen short sketches or "characters" of ideal social types; e.g., the good wife, the good husband, the good parent, the good child, the constant virgin, the good schoolmaster, the true gentleman. Illustrative brief biographies are appended to many of these; thus, "the faithful minister" is followed by the life of Fuller's favorite theologian, Mr. Perkins, and "the good sea-captain" by that of Sir Francis Drake. Book III varies in consisting entirely of essays, strongly influenced by Bacon's and in some cases on the same subjects; e.g., "Of Travelling," "Of Building," "Of Plantations," "Of Marriage," "Of Fame";<sup>37</sup> and the last (fifth) book balances the previous good characters with "profane" ones; e.g., "The Witch" and "The Atheist," with appropriate lives of the Witch of Endor, Joan of Arc, and Caesar Borgia. For the edification of his readers Fuller has here drawn upon the four most currently popular types of light prose: the essay, "character," short biography, and courtesy or etiquette book. So much moral improvement combined with so much actual readability seldom fails to sell a volume, and this one was very successful. Its appearance, however, coincided with the outbreak of war between Charles I and the Parliament, and Fuller's royalist leanings forced him to forsake his distinguished post of "lecturer" at the Savoy in London and join Charles's court at Oxford. He was by no means a rabid Cavalier, but was a sincere one, and as chaplain went through a campaign with the unsuccessful royalist troops in the west. After their defeat he retired to Exeter and there printed his *Good Thoughts in Bad Times* (1645), which was followed by *Good Thoughts in Worse Times* (1647), and finally, when Charles II was restored, by *Mixed Contemplations in Better Times* (1660).

The Holy  
and Profane  
States

Fuller's  
Good  
Thoughts

Brevity and variety are the soul of Fuller's wit. The books just mentioned consist of very brief essays, grouped under such headings as "personal meditations," "Scripture observations," or "historical applications." They commonly begin with an anecdote, and even when most dolorous in subject, are likely to be brightened by Fuller's characteristic witticisms and by sallies of cheerful common sense. They may be regarded as skeleton outlines of the sermons Fuller did not preach, for he lost his clerical appointments at the triumph of the Commonwealth. Later his friend the Earl of Carlisle

<sup>35</sup> The Palestinian interest was continued in one of Fuller's handsomest books, *A Pisgah-Sight of Palestine and the Confines Thereof, with the History of the Old and New Testament* (1650).

<sup>36</sup> See W. E. Houghton, *The Formation of Thomas Fuller's Holy and Profane States*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1938); *Thomas Fuller's the Holy State and the Profane State*, edited by M. G. Walten (1938). This work has two title-pages, *The Holy State*, applying to Books I-IV, and *The Profane State*, applying to Book V. In addition to the works discussed above, Fuller published many sermons, e.g. *Joseph's Parti-Colored Coat* (1640).

<sup>37</sup> See D. F. Beckingham, "Parallel Passages in Bacon and Fuller," *RES*, xiii (1937), 449-453.



*The  
Church  
History*

appointed him curate of Waltham; but Fuller was able to support himself by his busy pen, and he is said to have been the first English writer to do so. In 1655 his great *Church History* was printed, followed by the *History of the University of Cambridge* and by *The Appeal of Injured Innocence* (1659), Fuller's charming *apologia* addressed to Dr. Peter Heylin, who had animadverted upon alleged errors and improprieties in the *Church History*.

*Fuller's  
Worthies of  
England*

In 1660 Fuller was among the loyalists sent to Holland to prepare the restoration of Charles II. The King made him his chaplain and destined him for a bishopric; but he died the next year, at the early age of fifty-three, before he could receive that dignity or see the publication of his greatest work, *The History of the Worthies of England* (1662).<sup>38</sup> This book, arranged alphabetically by counties, is a mine of antiquarian learning indispensable to students at the present day; but Fuller's learning is always worn lightly, and the mass of data he has compiled about each county—from natural commodities, wonders, proverbs, buildings and manufactures, through notabilia about its most eminent men and women, to the quaint and witty "farewell" with which he always takes his leave—is so engrossing that a busy man can approach it only with peril. It is here that one finds the famous tale of the "wit combats" between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson (Warwickshire, Writers) and the true story of the Vicar of Bray (Berkshire, Proverbs).

*Richard  
Baxter*

Richard Baxter<sup>39</sup> (1615-1691) was for the general body of devout Puritans much what Fuller was for the devout members of the other party. Like Fuller, he suffered for his convictions with courage and dignity, and professed the faith that was in him without rancor. He was equally voluminous, though within a narrower range. Most of his work dates from after Fuller's death, and after his own preaching had been stopped by the Uniformity Act of 1662; but while still a young man and chaplain in the Parliamentary army, he had written his most popular book of devotion, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* (printed in 1650). It presents, as Bunyan was to do a little later, the milder and sweeter side of Puritanism, in a style marked by short exclamatory sentences, rhetorical questions, and constant appeals to the reader's better nature. Baxter was a firm believer in hell fire, and could do justice to it; e.g.—

*The Saints'  
Everlasting  
Rest*

The principal author of hell-torments is God himself. As it was no less than God whom sinners had offended, so it is no less than God who will punish them for their offences. He hath prepared those torments for his enemies. His continued anger will still be devouring them. His breath of indignation will kindle the flames. His wrath will be an intolerable burden to their souls. If it were but a creature they had to do with, they might better bear it. Woe to him that falls under the strokes of the Almighty! (ch. vi, ii. 1)

But he labors more to paint the ineffable joys of the "everlasting rest" in heaven and the happiness of an innocent soul. "Avoid frequent disputes

<sup>38</sup> Ed. P. A. Nuttall (3v, 1840).

<sup>39</sup> See F. J. Powicke, *A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter* (1924); A. R. Ladell, *Richard Baxter, Puritan and Mystic* (1925).

about lesser truths," he advises, "and a religion that lies only in opinions. They are usually least acquainted with a heavenly life, who are violent disputers about the circumstantial of religion" (ch. xii, i. 4).

And oh, the sinful folly of many of the saints, who drench their spirits in continual sadness, and waste their days in complaints and groans, and so make themselves, both in body and mind, unfit for this sweet and heavenly work! (ch. xii, ii. 7).

The very act of loving God in Christ is inexpressibly sweet. The soul that is best furnished with grace, when it is not in action, is like a lute well stringed and tuned, which while it lieth still maketh no more music than a common piece of wood; but when it is handled by a skilful musician, the melody is delightful. Some degree of comfort follows every good action, as heat accompanies fire, and as beams and influence issue from the sun (ch. viii, 2).

A similar tone of moderate nonconformity and plain speaking informs most of the work of the group of "Cambridge Platonists,"<sup>40</sup> of whom the chief are: Benjamin Whichcote (1609-1683), Henry More (1614-1687), John Smith (1616-1652), Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688), and Nathanael Culverwel (1618-1651). They drew from deeper philosophical sources than Baxter, who was self-educated. The most learned productions of Cudworth and, in prose, of More date from after 1660. The most interesting stylist is Culverwel, but the most characteristic single work by any of the group may perhaps be the applauded sermon<sup>41</sup> which Cudworth preached before the House of Commons, March 31, 1647, in behalf of broadmindedness and inward piety. It is logical, non-sectarian, and bold, working by homely figures such as the one with which on the last page Cudworth sums up his plea:

*The  
Cambridge  
Platonists*

Tin or lead, or any other baser metal, if it be cast into never so good a mould, and made up into never so elegant a figure; yet it is but tin or lead still: it is the same metal that it was before. And if we be moulded into never so good a form of outward government, unless we new-mould our hearts within too, we are but a little better than we were before.

The resemblance of this erudite and earnest band to the Oxford group, which revolved about Colet a century and a half earlier, is often striking.

<sup>40</sup> See F. J. Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists* (Cambridge, Mass., 1926); E. T. Campagnac, *The Cambridge Platonists* (selections from Whichcote, Smith, and Culverwel, Oxford, 1901).

<sup>41</sup> Reproduced by the Facsimile Text Society (1930).

## VII

### Seventeenth-Century Prose: II. Character Books. Autobiography. Walton.

Here is no bombasted or fustian stuff, but every line weighed as with a balance and every sentence placed with judgment and deliberation.

*The Character Books*

Joseph Hall

These words, written about a play of Middleton's and already quoted, express also the artistic aim and describe the chief literary merit of the seventeenth-century "character books";<sup>1</sup> and they are particularly appropriate if one compares the first such book, Joseph Hall's *Characters of Virtues and Vices* (1608), with the same writer's earlier *Virgidemiae*<sup>2</sup> (1597) which is fustian stuff of the most arrant kind. Hall's model was the *Ethical Characters* of Theophrastus (372-287 B.C.), describing in brief and caustic prose some thirty unpleasant Athenian civic types. Hall, who has about the same number of sketches, divided them into good and bad examples; e.g., the wise man, the honest man, the true friend, in contrast with the malcontent, the flatterer, and the unthrift; and he intensified the moral note. It is not unlikely that his immediate inspiration was found in the incidental character sketches that Ben Jonson had introduced into *Every Man out of His Humor* (1599) and *Cynthia's Revels* (1600).

*The "Overbury" Characters*

The only state of mind which would account for the immense popularity enjoyed by this species of writing is an exaggerated intensity of social consciousness and a temporary suspension of the taste for fiction; but the "character" owed the beginning of its special vogue to a purely accidental cause. Hall's characters met with no particular acclaim;<sup>3</sup> it was the next collection, linked with the name of Sir Thomas Overbury, that aroused the public interest. Overbury had died a mysterious death in the Tower, September 15, 1613, and early in the next year a publisher brought out his didactic poem, *A Wife*. It is written dully enough in the six-line *Venus and Adonis* stanza, but another

<sup>1</sup> See E. N. S. Thompson, "Character Books," in *Literary Byways of the Renaissance* (New Haven, 1924), pp. 1-27; G. Murphy, *A Cabinet of Characters* (Oxford, 1925); R. Aldington, *A Book of "Characters"* (Broadway Translations, n.d.); G. Murphy, *A Bibliography of English Character-Books* (Bibl. Soc., Oxford, 1925).

<sup>2</sup> This consists of six books of satires in riming verse. The title, which means "a bunch of switches," is usually quoted, as the title-page prints it, in the genitive case, *Virgidemiarum*.

<sup>3</sup> They had, however, a considerable success in French translation. An interesting transitional work, worth mentioning here, is *The Curtain-drawer of the World* (1612) by William Parkes, in which a mannered and sententious prose alternates with forceful satiric verse. Parkes introduces prose characters of such types as the usurer, the lawyer, the courtier, the countryman, the citizen, the physician, and the harlot to give point to his arraignment of contemporary vice. His verse contains some interesting echoes of *Hamlet*, and the concluding tetrameter couplets which he puts into the mouth of Death have real vigor. (Reprinted Grosart, *Occasional Issues*, III, 1876.)

edition was immediately called for,<sup>4</sup> and this was amplified by twenty-two prose characters ascribed to Overbury "and other learned gentlemen his friends." The Preface to the Reader of this edition is dated May 16, 1614. By August 24 four more editions had appeared, and fourteen others were issued in the next half-century. As the printings multiplied, the number of characters was gradually increased to a total of eighty-three, the work of many unnamed writers, among whom John Donne and the dramatists Dekker and Webster are recognizable.<sup>5</sup> The "Overbury" characters are even shorter than those of Hall; few of them extend to much more than three hundred words. They introduce characters of women as well as men and make no formal division between good and bad, thus achieving greater naturalness and a more pleasing diversity. Good writing went into them, and two of those which are most probably ascribed to Webster, "A Fair and Happy Milkmaid" and "A Franklin" (i.e., country squire), have retained their charm.<sup>6</sup>

The phenomenal popularity of this collection naturally invited competition. A certain John Stephens was early in the field with *Satirical Essays, Characters, and Others* (1615), and those indefatigable pen-pushers, Nicholas Breton<sup>7</sup> (1545-1626) and Richard Brathwait<sup>8</sup> (1588-1673), played further variations upon the new type. A young gentleman at Gray's Inn, Geoffrey Minshull (c. 1594-1668), when sent to King's Bench Prison for debt, improved his leisure there by writing his lively if rather vapid *Essays and Characters of a Prison and Prisoners*<sup>9</sup> (1618). Among character-sequences almost as numerous as sonnet-sequences had been, the *Microcosmography*<sup>10</sup> (1628) of John Earle (c. 1601-1665) achieved an easy fame (1628). "Some very witty and sharp discourses," says Clarendon, "being published in print without his consent, though known to be his, he grew suddenly into a very general esteem with all men." The esteem has lasted, for Earle is the most attractive of the character writers. He has an individual point of view. Being for nearly twenty years a fellow of Merton College, Oxford, he takes many of his best subjects from college life: a young raw preacher, an old college butler, a downright scholar, a young gentleman of the university, a plodding student, an university don, and so forth. There are only two characters of women among the seventy-eight to which his collection ultimately reached, but he sometimes writes the character of an inanimate object, as of a tavern, which

Earle's  
Microcos-  
mography

<sup>4</sup> A sprightlier imitation, in the same stanza, appeared in 1617 from the pen of Samuel Rowlands: *The Bride* (ed. A. C. Potter, Boston, 1905).

<sup>5</sup> See W. J. Paylor, *The Overburian Characters* (Oxford, 1936).

<sup>6</sup> See F. L. Lucas, *The Complete Works of John Webster* (1928), iv. 5-61.

<sup>7</sup> *Characters upon Essays, Moral and Divine* (with dedication to Bacon, 1615); *The Good and the Bad, or Descriptions of the Worthies and Unworthies of this Age* (1616).

<sup>8</sup> *Essays upon the Five Senses* (1620); *Whimzies* (1631). See M. W. Black, *Richard Brathwait, an Account of his Life and Works* (Philadelphia, 1928). Brathwait's curious book *Barnabee's Journal* (c. 1634), called also *Barnabee's Journey*, has constantly been "rediscovered"; the latest reprint appeared in 1933.

<sup>9</sup> Reprinted, 150 copies, Edinburgh, 1821.

<sup>10</sup> The most recent edition is that of H. Osborne (1933). That of P. Bliss (1811) is in a manner of speaking standard; that of A. S. West (Cambridge, 1897) is good.

is a degree, or (if you will) a pair of stairs above an alehouse, where men are drunk with more credit and apology. . . . It is the common consumption of the afternoon and the murderer or maker-away of a rainy day. . . . A house of sin you may call it, but not a house of darkness, for the candles are never out, and it is like those countries far in the north where it is as clear at midnight as at midday.

Earle has a neat epigrammatic style which, if he had lived a century later, would have been called Addisonian; and he has real and abundant wit, which grows sharp whenever he attacks insincerity. A pretender to learning, he says, "is one that would make others more fools than himself; for though he know nothing, he would not have the world know so much." There is the true satirist's indignation in his conclusion to "a forward bold man":

Thus preferment at last stumbles on him because he is still in the way. His companions, that flouted him before, now envy him, when they see him come ready for scarlet,<sup>11</sup> whilst themselves lie musty in their old clothes and colleges.

Earle's masterpiece, however, is in another spirit; it is the first character in his book, "A child," and has in it much both of Wordsworth and of George Herbert:

. . . His hardest labor is his tongue, as if he were loath to use so deceitful an organ; and he is best company with it when he can but prattle. We laugh at his foolish sports, but his game is our earnest; and his drums, rattles, and hobby-horses but the emblems and mocking of man's business. His father hath writ him as his own little story, wherein he reads those days of his life that he cannot remember, and sighs to see what innocence he has outlived. The elder he grows, he is a stair lower from God, and like his first father much worse in his breeches. . . . Could he put off his body with his little coat, he had got eternity without a burthen, and exchanged but one heaven for another.

The *Microcosmography* was very popular, and drew Earle from Oxford to the court, where he became chaplain to the Lord Chamberlain (the Earl of Pembroke), tutor to the Prince of Wales, and an adviser of Charles I. He was one of the most respected and moderate clergymen of his time, remained true to the royal cause, and after the Restoration became successively Dean of Westminster, Bishop of Worcester, and Bishop of Salisbury.

Numerous books of characters followed the *Microcosmography*,<sup>12</sup> notably the large collection that Samuel Butler wrote after the Restoration; but Earle best illustrates the courtly charm of the species and shows its underlying affinity with the *Tatler* and *Spectator* essays, many of which are far closer to his work than to Bacon's. An important development resulted when the art

<sup>11</sup> I.e., the garb of a doctor or judge.

<sup>12</sup> The *Character of the Low Countries* by Owen Feltham (1602?-1668) is an extended example of the local "character," based on actual observations in Holland. This was not printed till 1652, but was written long before. Feltham's *Resolves*, which passed through eight editions between 1623 and 1636 and enjoyed a certain vogue in the nineteenth century, can be best described as a collection of short essays written in the style of the character books. See F. S. Tupper, "New Facts regarding Owen Feltham," *MLN*, LIV (1939). 199-201.

of the fictitious or generic character was applied to the portraiture of historical figures, as in Sir Robert Naunton's *Observations on the Late Queen, Her Times, and Favorites*, written originally about 1630. In the hands of Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1609-1674), and under the sharpened focus of the civil wars, this type of writing was touched with genius, as in his famous characters of Lord Falkland, Charles I, and John Hampden. These immortal and remarkably impartial estimates of Hyde's contemporary friends and foes were composed in large part in 1646-1648, though not published till after incorporation twenty-five years later in his *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars*.<sup>13</sup>

Some time after 1610, as the cult of the "character" was developing, an isolated survivor from Elizabethan times, Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (1554-1628), wrote a famous prose work which, though strongly reminiscent of the earlier era, has some affinity also with the spirit of Overbury and Earle. When printed much later, and long after Greville's death,<sup>14</sup> the publisher entitled it *The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney, with the True Interest of England as It Then Stood. . . Together with a Short Account of the Maxims and Policies Used by Queen Elizabeth in Her Government*, along with a great deal more, for the title-page is one of the longest that has been employed to introduce a pamphlet of 40,000 words. Greville called it simply "A Dedication," intending it as a consecration of his own poems to the memory of his famous friend. It is not properly a biography of Sidney and tells few facts, though as he and Greville had been intimate companions from the age of ten, it contains some precious anecdotes. It is rather an extended "character" of Sidney, seen through the mist of a quarter-century as the true patriot or ideal gentleman, and of Elizabeth as the wise queen. More fundamentally, it is Greville's political and intellectual autobiography, expressed in his judgments of the persons who had most influenced him, and of the literary works in which he had attempted to set down his own principles. It is the expansive development of that view of himself which he condensed in his famous epitaph: "Fulke Greville, Servant to Queen Elizabeth, Councillor to King James, and Friend to Sir Philip Sidney." Greville's prose style retains the resonance of the Elizabethans and has little of the spruce self-consciousness of the character writers. Splendid sentences abound, but they tend to be over long for their syntactical frame and hence obscure, a single sentence frequently filling a paragraph of two hundred words. In this respect Greville is a link between the style of the *Arcadia* and that of Jeremy Taylor.

Greville's poems, to which the work just discussed was to serve as introduction, are of various and not easily ascertainable dates, having been much

Autobiography

Greville's  
"Life" of  
Sidney

<sup>13</sup> See D. Nichol Smith, *Characters from the Histories and Memoirs of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1918); and the discussion of Clarendon in Sir Charles Firth's *Essays, Historical and Literary* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 1-33.

<sup>14</sup> In 1652, with a Dedication to the Countess of Sunderland, Waller's "Sacharissa." See *Sir Fulke Greville's Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, with an introduction by Nowell Smith (Oxford, 1907).



Greville's  
Plays

revised in the course of his long life.<sup>15</sup> He wrote three closet dramas, of which one, on Antony and Cleopatra, was prudentially burned by the poet about the time of the Essex uprising (1601). The surviving ones, *Mustapha* (printed in 1609) and *Alaham*, both existing in several versions, are Senecan tragedies based upon atrocities of the past century in Turkey and Persia respectively. They are important mainly for the author's wrestlings in long choruses and soliloquies with the dark problems of statecraft and human malignity.<sup>16</sup>

## His Poems

Greville's lyrics, entitled *Caelica*, (which his *Dedication* does not mention) are the earliest and, on the whole, the least successful of his writings; for though he had great intelligence and metrical ability, he had little warmth of emotion. They consist of 109 poems, called sonnets, though less than half are actually in that form. Most of them appear to have been composed before Sidney's death in 1586.<sup>17</sup> More really significant are his long philosophical poems or "treatises" in six-line stanzas occasionally interspersed with *ottava rima*. Three of these, on *Human Learning*, *Fame and Honor*, and *Wars*, were first printed with the plays and *Caelica* in 1633; two others, on *Monarchy* and *Religion*, were brought to light in 1670. The longest and most closely argued is the *Treatise of Monarchy*, in fifteen sections and 664 stanzas; the best poetically is perhaps the first, which attacks the whole problem of knowledge in obvious relation to Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, though from a much more skeptical point of view. Here one finds lines of pungent satire,

Then what is our high-prais'd philosophy  
But books of poesy in prose compil'd? (st. 29),  
and of brilliant finish,

The artless use bears down the useless arts (st. 69).  
One fine figure, directed against the "instrumental" arts, i.e., grammar, logic, etc., seems an ironic judgment on Greville's own career,

I say, who too long in their cobwebs lurks,  
Doth like him that buys tools, but never works (st. 102).  
Beginning in acrid disillusion over man's efforts to know, this poem works round to a happier view, and toward the end achieves some stanzas of great sweetness and felicity; e.g.,

The chief use, then, in man of that he knows  
Is his painstaking for the good of all;  
Not fleshly weeping for our own-made woes,  
Not laughing from a melancholy gall,  
Not hating from a soul that overflows  
With bitterness breath'd out from inward thrall:  
But sweetly rather to ease, loose, or bind,  
As need requires, this frail, fall'n humankind (st. 143).

<sup>15</sup> The editor of his *Remains* in 1670 explains: "When he grew old, he revised the poems and treatises he had writ long before."

<sup>16</sup> *Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville, first Lord Brooke*, ed. G. Bullough (2v, 1939); see M. W. Croll, *The Works of Fulke Greville* (Philadelphia, 1903); A. H. Bullen, *Elizabethans* (1924), pp. 195-206; U. Ellis-Fermor, *The Jacobean Drama* (1936), pp. 191-200.

<sup>17</sup> See Wm. Frost, *Fulke Greville's "Caelica," an Evaluation* (Brattleboro, Vt., 1942).

Edward, Baron Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648), George Herbert's eldest brother, has some importance as a poet<sup>18</sup> and more as a philosopher, but he chiefly lives today by his autobiography,<sup>19</sup> which hardly presents him at all in those two aspects, but makes a great deal of him as a swashbuckler and lover. His actual life was not heroic and not even very romantic, but he had many experiences and knew well how to put himself into the center of every picture. His martial encounters do not seem to have been very deadly, but his stories of the quarrels with Lord de Walden and Sir John Ayres are in the best Dumas style and make him appear a second Cellini, or perhaps a second Falstaff. Witness this episode, when he finds Sir Thomas Somerset "with eleven or twelve more" intent upon his bodily injury:

*Lord Herbert of Cherbury*

I, running hereupon amongst them, put by some of their thrusts, and making towards him in particular, put by a thrust of his, and had certainly run him through, but that one Lieutenant Prichard, at that instant taking me by the shoulder, turned me aside; but I, recovering myself again, ran at him a second time, which he perceiving retired himself with the company to the tents, which were near, though not so fast but I hurt one Proger and some others also that were with him. But they being all at last got within the tents, I finding now nothing else to be done, got to my horse again, having received only a slight hurt on the outside of my ribs and two thrusts, the one through the skirts of my doublet and the other through my breeches, and about eighteen nicks upon my sword and hilt.

Herbert's style is easy and very readable, and few writers can better tell an anecdote. This, he says, occurred when he was ambassador in France:

It fell out one day that the Prince of Condé coming to my house, some speech happened concerning the King, my master, in whom, though he acknowledged much learning, knowledge, clemency, and divers other virtues, yet he said he had heard that the King was much given to cursing. I answered that it was out of his gentleness; but the Prince demanding how cursing could be a gentleness, I replied: "Yes, for though he could punish men himself, yet he left them to God to punish"; which defence of the King my master was afterwards much celebrated in the French court.

Though he wrote only for his immediate posterity—and indeed the *Life* was not known to the public till Horace Walpole discovered and printed it in 1764—Herbert had a good deal of the showman's art in displaying his wares. A rather trivial accident at the French court is thus advertised:

All which passage I have thought fit to set down, the accident above-mentioned being so strange that it can hardly be paralleled,

and some details about his person begin with the words:

<sup>18</sup> Lord Herbert's poems, which were influenced by Donne's, have been most scrupulously edited by G. C. Moore Smith (Oxford, 1923).

<sup>19</sup> Edited with introduction, notes, appendices, and a continuation of the life, by Sidney Lee (1886, etc.). See R. I. Aaron, "The 'Autobiography' of Edward, first Lord Herbert of Cherbury: the Original Manuscript Material," *MLR*, xxxvi (1941). 184-194; and Basil Willey, "Lord Herbert of Cherbury, a Spiritual Quixote of the Seventeenth Century," in *E&S*, xxvii (1942). 22-29.

I shall relate now some things concerning myself which, though they may seem scarce credible, yet, before God, are true.

One of the most artistic things about this amusing work is that Herbert had the dramatic sense to let it break off in 1624, at the close of his ambassadorship to France, which was the highest post he reached. He closes with a well-related miracle that God vouchsafed him in regarding the publication in the same year of his most important philosophical work, *De Veritate*.<sup>20</sup> Of this virtue he says many fine and original things in the Latin treatise, but he did not overwork it in the autobiography.

Sir  
Kenelm  
Digby

Sir Kenelm Digby<sup>21</sup> (1603-1665), the third in the series of great seventeenth-century gentlemen who adorned three successive generations, is likewise a man of fashion, poet, philosopher, and autobiographer. The height of Digby's slight performance as a poet is reached in a charming sonnet,

Like as smells or odors of delight  
Are not decreas'd by smelling of their scent.<sup>22</sup>

He was one of the truest lovers of Spenser in his age. The short essay *Concerning Spenser*, "that I wrote at Mr. May his desire," is as notable a tribute to that poet's powers of mind as can be found in the same compass; and he wrote also "the earliest learned commentary on Spenser,"<sup>23</sup> a twenty-five page brochure (1643) on the twenty-second stanza in the ninth canto of the second book of *The Faerie Queene*. He was one of the earliest readers of Sir Thomas Browne and wrote perhaps the earliest printed criticism of *Religio Medici* in his *Observations* on that work (1643).<sup>24</sup> This, though written with liveliness and courtesy, is contentious and abstruse; and Digby aspired to even more arduous philosophical laurels in the *Two Treatises* (1645), aggregating nearly six hundred pages, "in the one of which the nature of bodies, in the other the nature of man's soul, is looked into in way of discovery of the immortality of reasonable souls." They are dedicated to his son Kenelm as a counterpoise against "the calamity of this time."

His quasi-autobiography, to which he gave the title, "Loose Fantasies," and its first publisher (in 1827) the discreeter name of *Private Memoirs*, was

<sup>20</sup> See *De Veritate* by Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, translated with an introduction by M. H. Carré (Bristol, 1937). Herbert wrote also a long history of *The Life and Reign of King Henry VIII*; and in Latin a theological work which in title and somewhat in attitude anticipates Dryden: *De Religione Laici*. The last has been edited and translated, with a discussion of Herbert's philosophy and a comprehensive bibliography, by H. R. Hutcheson (New Haven, 1944).

<sup>21</sup> See E. W. Bligh, *Sir Kenelm Digby and his Venetia* (1932), an amusing account with some new material; and J. F. Fulton, *Sir Kenelm Digby, Writer, Bibliophile, and Protagonist of William Harvey* (1937).

<sup>22</sup> See H. A. Bright, *Poems from Sir Kenelm Digby's Papers* (1877).

<sup>23</sup> See, however, C. Camden, "The Architecture of Spenser's 'House of Alma,'" *MLN*, LVIII (1943), 262-265.

<sup>24</sup> Written in great haste in December, 1642, while Digby was imprisoned in Winchester House for royalist activities against the Parliament. The weird adventures and hairbreadth escapes for which Sir Kenelm was famous began almost with his birth. The heir of a wealthy Catholic family in the north, he was not three years old when his father, Sir Everard Digby, was executed for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot against James I. The objections to *Religio Medici* in his *Observations* are those of a devout and philosophical Catholic.

written in earlier happier days, at the age of twenty-five, while the author was commanding a marauding expedition in the Mediterranean. The background suggests the *Adventures of a Younger Son* of Byron's friend Trelawny, whom Digby resembled in some respects. His narrative is a considerably altered version of his love for Venetia Stanley, who after extraordinary experiences had become his wife three years before. It may have been the Greek environment in which he wrote that prompted him to disguise his memoirs as a tale like Sidney's *Arcadia* or the Alexandrian romances. The names are fictitious, Digby appearing as Theagenes,<sup>25</sup> and Venetia, doubtless in memory of Sidney's famous love, as Stelliana. Other characters are not so certainly identifiable; but in spite of its classical names and locale, the book is important as social history, while also interesting as a gesture in the direction of prose fiction at a period when the production of such work was in strange eclipse.

Very unlike the preceding autobiographical works, all of which crept belatedly and with small notice into print, is the *Eikon Basilike* (King's Image), or "the portraiture of his sacred majesty in his solitudes and sufferings." This was printed at the time of Charles I's execution, early in 1649, and purports to be the King's spiritual autobiography, that is, his reflections and prayers upon the later events of his unhappy reign and his advice to his son.<sup>26</sup> It made an enormous sensation. Innumerable editions came out; John Earle, the author of *Microcosmography*, translated it into Latin and Milton replied harshly to it in his *Eikonoklastes* (Image-breaker). Attempts to prove it a forgery by Dr. John Gauden made it a mystery hotly debated for over two centuries. Dr. Gauden charged himself with the fraud, and was rewarded after the Restoration with two bishoprics. The mystery cannot be said to be yet finally solved, but on literary grounds there is no very good reason to doubt the King's essential authorship. The *Eikon* is not a great piece of prose, being pietistic, self-exculpatory, and conventional, but it sounds sincere and expresses the ideas that Charles I held. If it is an out and out forgery, the author must have been a much cleverer person than the King was, to mimic him so well, and Dr. Gauden was hardly that.

A self-educated shopkeeper of London, Izaak Walton<sup>27</sup> (1593-1683), was raised to intimate friendship with many of the most eminent persons of his day by the simple goodness of his heart and the natural charm of his conversation. These same two qualities have helped to make him one of the most

<sup>25</sup> The name of the hero of the *Aethiopian History* of Heliodorus.

<sup>26</sup> The title may have been suggested by the *Basiliikon Doron* of Charles's father, which has in part a similar purpose. See the preceding chapter. For a very full discussion of certain aspects of the *Eikon Basilike* and of Milton's relation to it, see S. B. Liljegren, *Studies in Milton* (Lund, 1918), pp. 37-160.

<sup>27</sup> See G. L. Keynes, *The Compleat Walton* (1929). The Lives have been printed with an intro. by G. Saintsbury (Oxford, 1927); see J. E. Butt, *A Bibliography of Izaak Walton's Lives* (1930; *Proc. Oxford Bibl. Soc.*, 11). Among the nearly innumerable editions of *The Compleat Angler*, that of R. B. Marston (2v, 1888) is one of the most useful. See P. Oliver, *A New Chronicle of The Compleat Angler* (1936), which records that this work was printed five times in the seventeenth century, ten times in the eighteenth, 164 times in the nineteenth, and about 100 times in the first third of the twentieth; and for further details T. Brooke, "The Lambert Walton-Cotton Collection," *Yale Univ. Lib. Gazette*, xvii (1943). 61-65.

beloved English writers. "When I sometimes look back upon my education and mean abilities," he wrote after he had become famous, "it is not without some little wonder at myself, that I am come to be publicly in print."

Walton's  
Lives

His beginning was altogether accidental. As a devout member of Dr. Donne's London parish of St. Dunstan's, Walton became, in his own words, "the poorest, the meanest, of all his friends," and through Donne, no doubt, the friend also of the great Dean's lifelong intimate, Sir Henry Wotton, Provost of Eton.<sup>28</sup> On Donne's death Wotton undertook to write his biography and commissioned Walton to collect data for the work, but died himself in 1639 before effecting it. So, lest the great edition of Donne's sermons in 1640 be left to appear without any introduction, Walton attempted the task with such success that, though two good men were never more unlike, his *Life* became almost a *sine qua non* for every subsequent edition of Donne's prose or poetry. An equally brief and luminous life of Wotton naturally followed. A short passage from this will illustrate Walton's simple style; it is the passage that later suggested Gray's *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*. Walton imagines Sir Henry speaking, after returning when an old man, from a visit to the school of his boyhood:

... my now being in that school, and seeing that very place where I sat when I was a boy, occasioned me to remember those very thoughts of my youth which then possessed me: sweet thoughts indeed, that promised my growing years numerous pleasures without mixtures of cares . . . But age and experience have taught me that those were but empty hopes . . . Nevertheless, I saw there a succession of boys using the same recreations, and, questionless, possessed with the same thoughts that then possessed me. Thus one generation succeeds another, both in their lives, recreations, hopes, fears, and death.

Walton in retirement attended to his angling. "I lay quiet twenty years," he says, "without a thought of either troubling myself or others by any new engagement in this kind, for I thought I knew my unfitness." But at last a great church dignitary—Gilbert Sheldon, in fact, later the Archbishop of Canterbury—constrained the simple soul to write the life of Richard Hooker in order to set right the "many dangerous mistakes" in Bishop Gauden's<sup>29</sup> biography of that great Elizabethan. This is the only case in which Walton stepped out of his own time to describe a man whom he had not seen, but none of the lives is better than that of Hooker, whose humble character and plain religion made an appeal to Walton that he has immortally transmitted. He later added (1670), as "a free-will offering" and "chiefly to please myself," the life of George Herbert, whom Walton infinitely admired though he had not enjoyed his personal friendship; and, at the surprising age of eighty-five, a life of Bishop Sanderson of Lincoln, whom Walton had known in the days of the Puritan persecutions.

<sup>28</sup> Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639) was, among many other things, a minor poet of considerable charm, whose extant verses will be found in J. Hannah, *The Courtly Poets from Wotton to Montrose* (1870). See also L. P. Smith, *Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton* (2v, Oxford, 1907).

<sup>29</sup> The alleged author of *Eikon Basilike*; see above.

*The Complete Angler, or the Contemplative Man's Recreation*,<sup>30</sup> was printed in 1653, in the long interval between the first two and the last three of Walton's *Lives*. The date is important, for it was the period of fullest triumph of the Puritan cause, which Walton loathed. In the *Life of Sanderson* he says:

The Complete Angler

When I look back upon the ruin of families, the bloodshed, the decay of common honesty, and how the former piety and plain dealing of this now sinful nation is turned into cruelty and cunning, I praise God that he prevented me from being of that party which helped to bring in this Covenant and those sad confusions that have followed it.

It is the unmentioned background of senseless war and triumphant evil that gives *The Complete Angler* the otherworldliness which it rather strangely shares with the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Walton was as unlike Bunyan as possible in everything except his piety and his distress. He was neither a mystic nor a preacher, and had no recourse except to make his humble best of God's lovely world. So the book opens with a kind of *Magnificat* in which all the creatures of earth and air and water bless the Lord, praise him and magnify him forever. The form is loosely that of the dialogue, as in Ascham's *Toxophilus*. Three plain men,<sup>31</sup> fond respectively of birds, dogs, and fish, turn their backs upon the city and trudge out Tottenham Court Road into the fields, where for five days they endure the showers without grumbling and meet only the simplest and kindest folk: milkmaids, hostesses of inns, and fellow anglers. There is a great deal about catching fish and cooking them that anglers think important, and much misinformation out of Walton's broad but unsystematic reading; but the preservative element is the nostalgia which a saddened man of sixty felt for a fairer age that had passed away. The fisherman can forget politics and recover his innocence. "No life, my honest scholar," says Piscator, no life so happy and so pleasant as the life of a well-governed angler; for when the lawyer is swallowed up with business, and the statesman is preventing or contriving plots, then we sit on cowslip banks, hear the birds sing, and possess ourselves in as much quietness as these silent silver streams, which we now see glide so quietly by us. Indeed, my good scholar, we may say of angling, as Dr. Boteler said of strawberries, "Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did"; and so, if I might be judge, God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling.

In Walton's fancy the quiet rivers still echo with the songs that Marlowe and Sir Walter Raleigh sang so long ago. The whole book is haunted by the Elizabethans, whose names are fragrant to him: Frank Davison and Chalkhill, Michael Drayton and Phineas Fletcher; and their nature poetry was never more charming than in the bucolic setting in which he repeats it. He omits nothing, one might say, appropriate to his effect, except that song of

<sup>30</sup> James Russell Lowell wrote a charming and witty introduction to the Boston edition of 1889.

<sup>31</sup> In the first edition there are but two, Piscator and Viator. Walton's contemporary popularity gave him opportunity to expand his works considerably, a thing he did with skill and judgment.



Shakespeare's fool which seems to embody the soul of the Waltonian philosophy,

He that has and a little tiny wit,  
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
Must make content with his fortunes fit,  
Though the rain it raineth every day.

# VIII

## Seventeenth-Century Prose: III. The Baroque Glory

The Jacobean tendency to simplicity and sententiousness in prose, eminently illustrated in Bacon and the character writers, was a revulsion from Elizabethan Gothicism and a long step toward the taste of the age of Queen Anne. But the revulsion was never complete, and before James I died (1625) the temporarily arrested Gothic taste had come surging back to create a mingled style which can best be called "baroque"<sup>1</sup> and which, in the dizzy intensities it attained, has never been equaled. Donne's prose is the best illustration of this ferment.

*The  
Baroque  
Style*

A recent writer has remarked that Donne's preaching "shows all the symptoms of fever."<sup>2</sup> He was the outstanding preacher of his day, and his sermons,<sup>3</sup> of which over 160 have been preserved, fascinated his auditors (as they do the readers still) by silhouetting in darkest horror all the unresolved conflicts of his soul. They are compact of fear, egoism, poetry, and a kind of moral exhibitionism in which the sublime and the loathsome are inextricably confused, as they are also in the awfully symbolic portrait that shows him wearing a prematurely assumed shroud. Worms, putrefaction, and the fear of death and judgment are perpetually in the foreground of his thought. The sins of his youth become the baroque ornaments of his pious eloquence. Thus he speaks to God in one of the remarkable *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1624) which chart the movements of his mind during an almost fatal illness:

*John Donne  
(1572-  
1631)*

If I accuse myself of original sin, wilt thou ask me if I know what original sin is? I know not enough of it to satisfy others, but I know enough to condemn myself, and to solicit thee. If I confess to thee the sins of my youth, wilt thou

<sup>1</sup> *Baroque* as here used describes work in which the Gothic elements listed by Ruskin—e.g., savageness, changefulness, grotesqueness, redundancy—develop out of a fundamentally classic pattern. See M. W. Croll, "The Baroque Style in Prose," *Studies . . . in Honor of Frederick Klaeber* (1929), and also G. Saintsbury, *A History of English Prose Rhythm* (1912), pp. 168-200.

<sup>2</sup> H. I'A. Fausset, *John Donne, a Study in Discord* (1924), p. 278. On Elizabethan sermon literature see Alan F. Herr, *The Elizabethan Sermon: A Survey and a Bibliography* (Philadelphia, 1940).

<sup>3</sup> E. M. Simpson, *A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne* (Oxford, 1924) is very useful. Excellently selected passages from the sermons have been edited with an essay by L. P. Smith (Oxford, 1919); and the *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* and *Death's Duel* (Donne's last sermon) by W. H. Draper (Abbey Classics, xx). A sympathetic treatment of Donne's religion will be found in R. W. Battenhouse, "The Grounds of Religious Toleration in the Thought of John Donne," *Church History*, xi (1942). 217-248. For further bibliography see n. 27 in the chapter following.

ask me if I know what those sins were? I know them not so well as to name them all, nor am sure to live hours enough to name them all (for I did them then faster than I can speak them now, when everything that I did conduced to some sin), but I know them so well as to know that nothing but thy mercy is so infinite as they.

Man is a worm, and destined to be worms' meat, he constantly preaches, sometimes in language of torrid terror that builds up like a thunder-storm:

That God should let my soul fall out of his hand into a bottomless pit, and roll an unremovable stone upon it, and leave it to that which it finds there (and it shall find that there which it never imagined till it came thither), and never think more of that soul, never have more to do with it; that of that providence of God, that studies the life of every weed, and worm, and ant, and spider, and toad, and viper, there should never, never any beam flow out upon me . . . (Sermon lxxvi).

The sentence rolls on through one majestic "that" clause after another to the length of five hundred words. And, on the other hand, he can annihilate hope with a single flash of cynical scorn, as

I would not make man worse than he is, nor his condition more miserable than it is. But could I though I would? (*Devotions*, xiv).

Donne's unexpectedness is a large element in his grotesque but moving art. His metaphors are among the most brilliant in our literature; he takes them largely from sea-faring or maps or the courses of the stars, but he can draw a figure of marvelous vividness and precision out of so dry a subject as syntax:

If we consider eternity, into that time never entered; eternity is not an everlasting flux of time, but time is a short parenthesis in a long period;<sup>4</sup> and eternity had been the same as it is, though time had never been.

He sees antitheses and incongruities on all sides. Puns and bitter jokes sometimes break the flow of his most sonorous sentences:

A man that is not afraid of a lion is afraid of a cat; not afraid of starving, and yet is afraid of some joint of meat at the table presented to feed him; not afraid of the sound of drums and trumpets and shot and those which they seek to drown, the last cries of men, and is afraid of some particular harmonious instrument; so much afraid as that with any of these the enemy might drive this man, otherwise valiant enough, out of the field.<sup>5</sup>

In his youth he had written a number of brief flippancies of much cleverness and little weight called *Paradoxes and Problems*, and in his later work his tormented brain circled about the great paradox that a creature with

<sup>4</sup> That is, sentence or paragraph. Sir Thomas Browne is probably imitating this when he says at the close of *Christian Morals*: "The created world is but a small parenthesis in eternity."

<sup>5</sup> Compare Shylock's speech, *Merchant of Venice*, iv. i. 47-58.

man's frailties should be immortal. Bacon took pride in the idea,<sup>6</sup> but it terrified Donne and whipped the texture of his sermons into cloudy phosphorescence.<sup>7</sup>

Three or four years after Donne's death a young doctor of thirty, as yet very far from knighthood or other fame, was writing a book which is as brilliant an example of baroque prose as any of the great dean's sermons. In tone and quality of thought it is so different as almost to seem a conscious plea against Donne's dark theology; but this is not likely, for little of the latter, except the *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, was yet in print, and Thomas Browne<sup>8</sup> (1605-1682) had had little or no opportunity to hear Donne preach. He had been born in London, but educated, classically and copiously, at Winchester and Oxford, after which he spent several years in medical studies at Montpellier, Padua, and Leyden, receiving his M.D. degree from the last university in 1634. His first book, *Religio Medici* (A Doctor's Religion), written in a Yorkshire village, was the product of the vacant period after his return to England and before he settled into active practice. In 1637 he established himself in Norwich, and spent the rest of his long life as a provincial doctor there.

Sir Thomas  
Browne

Religio  
Medici

*Religio Medici* is the author's private journal in which he attempts to read his own mind; it was not printed till 1642, and then in an unauthorized text. Had Browne been writing today, he would probably have aired his views on scientific and social theory, but in the seventeenth century theology was the natural field for self-appraisal. He begins by declaring that, though a physician, he is a Christian and a member of the Church of England, not intolerant, however, of other faiths, and has a temperament sympathetic to superstition. He subscribes to the articles of his church, but reserves his right of judgment on other points, deploring quarrels over religion, and avoids them. There must always be heretics, he thinks, and, becoming reminiscient, confesses three heresies that he formerly held but outgrew. "I love to lose myself in a mystery," he says, "to pursue my reason to an *O altitudo!*"<sup>9</sup> He sets down his thoughts about eternity and divine wisdom, and declares that men *should* inquire into God's works and the causes of things: "'tis the debt of our reason we owe unto God, and the homage we pay for not being beasts." This leads him to the wonders of natural history and to the assertion that God has given us two books, the Bible and the book of Nature, "that universal and public manuscript that lies expans'd unto the eyes of all: those that never

<sup>6</sup> E.g., in the opening of the essay on Adversity.

<sup>7</sup> A contemporary preacher of equal influence and learning, but quieter and more orderly in manner, was Bishop Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626). See T. S. Eliot, *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1929), pp. 13-48. Andrewes' 96 *Sermons* are reprinted in 5v, Oxford and London, 1874-78, and selections from them (160 pp.) in an undated pamphlet of the S.P.C.K.

<sup>8</sup> The best edition is *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, edited by G. L. Keynes (6v, 1927-1931), who has also prepared *A Bibliography of Sir Thomas Browne* (Cambridge, 1924). See also Edmund Gosse, *Sir Thomas Browne* (EML Series, 1905); O. Leroy, *Le Chevalier Thomas Browne, sa vie, sa pensée et son art* (Paris, 1931); and R. R. Cawley, "Sir Thomas Browne and His Reading," *PMLA*, XLVIII (1933), 426-470.

<sup>9</sup> A quotation from the Latin text of Rom. xi: 33, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

saw Him in the one have discovered Him in the other." Observation of nature's unlovelier creatures draws from him the remark:

I cannot tell by what logic we call a toad, a bear, or an elephant ugly . . . There is no deformity but in monstrosity, wherein, notwithstanding, there is a kind of beauty, Nature so ingeniously contriving the irregular parts as they become sometimes more remarkable than the principal fabric.

He proceeds to say that he has "always endeavored to compose those feuds and angry dissensions" which arise among the three forces in our minds, faith, reason, and passion:

As Reason is a rebel unto Faith, so Passion unto Reason: as the propositions of Faith seem absurd unto Reason, so the theorems of Reason unto Passion, and both unto Reason."

He illustrates this by a discussion of scientific explanations of biblical miracles. There are too many doctrinal books and the mind is clouded by them, "for obstinacy in a bad cause is but constancy in a good," and "persecution is a bad and indirect way to plant religion." Martyrs may be false as well as true. Browne himself believes in miracles, witches, and spirits, sees five biological levels in human life, from the prenatal embryo to the liberated soul, and has a low opinion of the body, which he deprecates in a figure as fantastically impressive as one of Donne's:

Nay, further, we are what we all abhor, *Anthropophagi* and cannibals, devourers not only of men but of ourselves, and that not in an allegory but a positive truth: for all this mass of flesh which we behold came in at our mouths; this frame we look upon hath been upon our trenchers; in brief, we have devoured ourselves.

Unlike Donne, he has no fear of death and argues against long life:

Were there any hopes to outlive vice, or a point to be superannuated from sin, it were worthy our knees to implore the days of Methuselah. But age doth not rectify, but incurvate, our natures, turning bad dispositions into worser habits, and (like diseases) brings on incurable vices; for every day as we grow weaker in age, we grow stronger in sin, and the number of our days doth but make our sins innumerable—

going on with words that recall the reasoning of Despair in Spenser.<sup>10</sup> He concludes the first book with a survey of eschatology, "the four last things," death, judgment, heaven, and hell, and argues against narrow views, sometimes in the enlightened spirit of Marlowe's Mephistophilis:

Men speak too popularly who place it in those flaming mountains which to grosser apprehensions represent Hell. The heart of man is the place the devils dwell in. I feel sometimes a hell within myself: Lucifer keeps his court in my breast, Legion is revived in me.

<sup>10</sup> *Faerie Queene*, I. ix. st. 43-46.

Upon the hell-fire school Browne turns a debonair back:

I thank God, and with joy I mention it: I was never afraid of Hell, nor never grew pale at the description of that place. I have so fixed my contemplations on Heaven that I have almost forgot the idea of Hell, and am afraid rather to lose the joys of the one than endure the misery of the other . . . I am confident and fully persuaded, yet dare not take my oath, of my salvation. I am as it were sure, and do believe without all doubt, that there is such a city as Constantinople; yet for me to take my oath thereon were a kind of perjury, because I hold no infallible warrant from my own sense to confirm me in the certainty thereof.

The second part of *Religio Medici*, much shorter than the first, deals wholly with the virtue Browne most advocates, charity. It is less analytical and even more naïvely personal than the first part, and contains a high proportion of his most memorable and sonorous sentences. The opening paragraph is an excellent example of his manner, as is also this passage near the middle of the book:

There is, I think, no man that apprehends his own miseries less than myself, and no man that so nearly apprehends another's. I could lose an arm without a tear, and with few groans, methinks, be quartered into pieces; yet can I weep most seriously at a play, and receive with true passion the counterfeit grief of those known and professed impostures.

It is likely that Dr. Browne, in all his estimable career, never prescribed a better medicine than when he wrote *Religio Medici*. The world was sick of horrors, on the brink of civil war, and in the throes of a harsh theology. The book is a prophylactic against totalitarian damnation, and the world took it to its heart. To be sure, it is written in a style and with a frank display of ingenuous personality that would sell any book, but its curative value was what carried it through Europe. There were nine English editions before 1660, and five in Latin. Before Browne's death it had been translated also into Dutch, French, and German. In December, 1642, before the acknowledged text had appeared, the Earl of Dorset recommended the book to Sir Kenelm Digby, who read it all night long and dashed off his *Observations* upon it. Browne thought these unfair in their dialectic (as they are), but they contain a perfect tribute to the personality that the *Religio Medici* reveals: "Assuredly, he is the owner of a solid head and of a strong generous heart."<sup>11</sup>

Browne's longest work is the *Pseudodoxia Epidemica, or Enquiries into Very Many Received Tenets and Commonly Presumed Truths*,<sup>12</sup> which appeared in a folio volume in 1646 and reached its sixth edition in 1672. The suggestion may have come from Bacon, who in his *Advancement of Learning* noted the lack of such a book, but the only real counterpart is Burton's

"Vulgar Errors"

<sup>11</sup> Browne's *Christian Morals*, a set of moral admonitions of much later date than *Religio Medici* and less interest, was the occasion of Samuel Johnson's life of the author (1756). Both have been edited by S. C. Roberts (Cambridge, 1927).

<sup>12</sup> Commonly known as *Vulgar Errors*.



*Anatomy of Melancholy*. It would not be easy to instance another work of equal size and equally miscellaneous and detailed scholarship which has so attracted and retained readers as these two. Browne was now a far busier man than Burton ever was, and he complains that the *Pseudodoxia* has had to be "composed by snatches of time" in such "medical vacations" as he has had, though, he confesses, "a work of this nature is not to be performed upon one leg, and should smell of oil, if duly and deservedly handled." It does smell of oil, however, though never pedantically. The spread of subject matter is enormous and enables the author to utilize not only the quasi-scientific data compiled by Aristotle, Pliny, and their learned followers, but also the impressively large amount of accurate observation he had himself made into botany, natural history, and medicine. Book 1 is an introduction, dealing with the psychological causes of error, very cogent in the main, but concluding with the argument that the endeavors of Satan are "the last and great promoter of false opinions." The remaining six books classify errors concerning mineral and vegetable bodies, animals, man, misrepresentations in pictures, etc., geography, and history. It is a work which only the privileged few can read in full; but it can be read with amusement in any part, and referred to with profit in connection with almost any strange belief about nature or history. Indeed, Browne has here confuted dozens of false ideas which some educated persons have even today not thought of questioning. The style is less conscious than that of *Religio Medici*, its chief marks being the author's growing taste for elaborately periodic sentences and the high proportion of Latin words in his vocabulary. Browne, indeed, apologizes for the last and wittily shows his recognition of this tendency in the language:

And indeed, if elegancy still proceedeth, and English pens maintain that stream we have of late observed to flow from many, we shall within few years be fain to learn Latin to understand English, and a work will prove of equal facility in either.<sup>13</sup>

#### Urn-Burial

Emphasis on style is more conspicuous in the two shorter works which followed: *Hydriotaphia, or Urn-Burial*, and *The Garden of Cyrus*, printed together in 1658. The latter is almost purely a monument to style and erudition, and can be recommended only to those who will accept those qualities as their own justification. *Urn-Burial*, in part a scientific report on forty or fifty Roman funeral urns recently exhumed near Norwich, becomes a disquisition on burial customs in general,<sup>14</sup> and in its last, most famous, chapter

<sup>13</sup> Prefatory epistle "To the Reader." It is to be noted that Browne's personal letters, of which a great many have been preserved, hardly show any trace of his peculiar style.

<sup>14</sup> Accident curiously repaid the macabre fascination which Browne here imparts to bones and burials. In 1840 his coffin was opened, and his skull (which is very remarkable cranio-logically) was stolen and sold by the sexton of the Norwich church in which he is buried. At the same time the skull of Ben Jonson was suffering extraordinary vicissitudes in Westminster Abbey (see J. Q. Adams, "The Bones of Ben Jonson," *SP*, xvi (1919), 289-302). Thus two of the most eminent heads of the seventeenth century experienced posthumous adventures in the nineteenth. It is not altogether certain where Jonson's is at present; Browne's was reinterred as late as 1922.

is a prose poem on death of perhaps unequaled verbal harmony.<sup>15</sup> A historian of the English essay has said:

Flawlessness is even more rare in prose than it is in verse, and if all the pieces were collected which a reasonable criticism could praise wholly without reserve, they would make only a very small volume. But an extraordinary proportion would come from *Urn-Burial*, a proportion higher than any other work of equal length would yield.<sup>16</sup>

The mild Anglican theology of Jeremy Taylor<sup>17</sup> (1613-1667) is probably more respected today than admired or studied;<sup>18</sup> it is by his language that he lives. In the ninety-first *Idler* paper Dr. Johnson paid a compliment to the great preachers, of whom Taylor is perhaps the greatest:

Our own language has, from the Reformation to the present time, been chiefly dignified and adorned by the works of our divines, who, considered as commentators, controvertists, and preachers, have undoubtedly left all other nations far behind them.

Coleridge, grouping him with Hooker, Bacon, and Milton, gives them all just praise:

In all these the language is dignified but plain, genuine English, although elevated and brightened by superiority of intellect in the writer. Individual words themselves are always used by them in their precise meaning, without either affectation or slipslop. . . . The words are selected because they are the most appropriate, regard being had to the dignity of the total impression, and no merely big phrases are used where plain ones would have sufficed, even in the most learned of their works.<sup>19</sup>

Taylor's place is with the baroque writers, but it is in the quiet center rather than the excited fringes of the movement. His works, enormous in bulk, are all devout, though they cover a wide range, from *The Liberty of Prophesying* (1647), an elaborately argued treatise on religious toleration, and the *Ductor Dubitantium* (1660), which embraces two encyclopaedic volumes of "cases of conscience," to *A Discourse of the Nature, Offices and Measures of Friendship, with Rules of Conducting It* (1657), which is a good-natured reply to Mrs. Katharine Philips ("the matchless Orinda") concerning her Platonic salon.

<sup>15</sup> See N. R. Tempest, "Rhythm in the Prose of Sir Thomas Browne," *RES*, III (1924), 308-318; E. L. Parker, "The *cursus* in Sir Thomas Browne," *PMLA*, LIII (1938), 1037-1053; J. M. Cline, "Hydriotaphia," in *Five Studies in Literature* (Berkeley, 1940), pp. 73-100.

<sup>16</sup> Hugh Walker, *The English Essay and Essayists* (1928), p. 79. Browne's influence upon the 19th century romanticists is well known; see Leroy, *op. cit.*, 301-313, and J. S. Iseman, *A Perfect Sympathy: Charles Lamb and Sir Thomas Browne* (Cambridge, Mass., 1937).

<sup>17</sup> L. Pearsall Smith's *Selected Passages from the Sermons and Writings of Jeremy Taylor* (Oxford, 1930) includes an excellent introduction and a fine bibliography. See also Edmund Gosse, *Jeremy Taylor* (EML Series, 1904); W. J. Brown, *Jeremy Taylor* (1925).

<sup>18</sup> See, however, C. J. Stranks, "Jeremy Taylor," *Church Quar. Rev.*, cxxxI (1940), 31-62.

<sup>19</sup> Coleridge's *Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. T. M. Raysor (1936), pp. 216f.

Jeremy  
Taylor

Taylor's extraordinary abilities were early discovered by Archbishop Laud, who transplanted him from Cambridge to Oxford and made it possible for him to become Chaplain-in-ordinary to Charles I. His earliest publication is a sermon dedicated to the Archbishop and delivered at St. Mary's, Oxford, in 1638 on the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot (November 5). The ruin of the King's cause was the ruin also of Taylor's hopes. After a period of imprisonment by the Parliamentary forces he found occupation as a teacher in South Wales, and had the happy chance to win the affection of a great royalist nobleman, Richard Vaughan, Earl of Carbery.<sup>20</sup> His funeral sermon on Lady Carbery, who died in October, 1650, is one of his most beautiful and moving productions. To her husband he dedicated his two most famous books, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* (1650) and *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (1651).

Holy  
Living  
and  
Holy  
Dying

In the eighteenth century he was dubbed "the Shakespeare of divines," and in the nineteenth Lamb, Coleridge, and Hazlitt sometimes ranked his genius absurdly high, with the result that he has since been overrated and underread. His style is not always great, or even easily readable, though always clear; but when he is deeply moved his mighty sentences unroll themselves like a work of nature—like a sunrise or the incoming of a tide,

such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam.

Their connectives are hardly noted, and often are omitted. They flow along in successive waves of parallel clauses, each series moving abreast with incomparable smoothness, till all finally give place to the figure for which all have been preparing:

And though her account to God was made up of nothing but small parcels, little passions and angry words and trifling discontents, which are the alloys of the piety of the most holy persons, yet she was early at her repentance; and toward the latter end of her days grew so fast in religion as if she had had a revelation of her approaching end, and therefore that she must go a great way in a little time: her discourses more full of religion, her prayers more frequent, her charity increasing, her forgiveness more forward, her friendships more communicative, her passion more under discipline; and so she trimmed her lamp, not thinking her night was so near, but that it might shine also in the daytime, in the temple and before the altar of incense (Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 23).

Taylor loved this world, and it is a great part of his praise that he let the brightness of its light and the freshness of its streams and breezes flow across his pages. The great sentence in *Holy Dying*, in which he compares man's life to the progress of the sun,

But as when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, . . . (Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 42),

<sup>20</sup> The earl's residence was at Golden Grove, Carmarthenshire. Hence the title of Taylor's book of prayers, *The Golden Grove* (1655), and his chief collections of sermons: *XXVIII Sermons Preached at Golden Grove* (1651) and *XXV Sermons Preached at Golden Grove* (1653).

is almost too famous for further quotation. The lively pathos with which the worm is treated in the following passage is no more admirable than the literary skill with which she is brought in at the opening and the close:

For as a worm creeping with her belly on the ground, with her portion of Adam's curse, lifts up its head to partake a little of the blessings of the air, and opens the junctures of her imperfect body, and curls her little rings into knots and combinations, drawing up her tail to a neighborhood of the head's pleasure and motion; but still it must return to abide the fate of its own nature, and dwell and sleep upon the dust: so are the hopes of a mortal man; he opens his eyes and looks upon fine things at distance, and shuts them again with weakness, because they are too glorious to behold; and the man rejoices because he hopes fine things are staying for him, but his heart aches because he knows there are a thousand ways to fail and miss of those glories, and though he hopes yet he enjoys not; he longs but he possesses not, and must be content with his portion of dust; and being a *worm and no man*, must lie down in this portion before he can receive the end of his hopes, the salvation of his soul in the resurrection of the dead.<sup>21</sup>

Taylor's fluidity and touches of natural color usually give an effect of gentleness, but when angry he can coil his sinuous clauses about an opponent like twisting wire, as in this outburst against the Puritans in 1655:

But now, instead of this excellency of condition and constitution of religion, the people are fallen under the harrows and saws of impertinent and ignorant preachers, who think all religion is a sermon and all sermons ought to be libels against truth and old governors, and expound chapters that the meaning may never be understood, and pray that they may be thought able to talk, but not to hold their peace, they casting not to obtain anything but wealth and victory, power and plunder; and the people have reaped the fruits apt to grow upon such crabstocks: they grow idle and false, hypocrites and careless, they deny themselves nothing that is pleasant, they despise religion, forget government, and some never think of heaven; and they that do, think to go thither in such paths which all the ages of the church did give men warning of, lest they should that way go to the devil.<sup>22</sup>

It is not easy to place the amusing Welshman, James Howell (1594-1666), James  
Howell whose work is in several different styles. He knew a great deal of the real world and in mental attitude is more akin to Samuel Pepys than to Sir Thomas Browne or Jeremy Taylor, but he had a vein of Celtic fancy which he could open at will. In early youth he had the opportunity of traveling extensively on the Continent on business connected with the manufacture of glass. Somewhat later he obtained diplomatic employment and did further travel, being in Madrid when Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham paid their famous visit to the Spanish court in 1623. He came to be one of the clerks of the Privy Council and dedicated his most interesting book, the *Epistolae Ho-Eliae* (1645), to Charles I. These letters, though not too

<sup>21</sup> Funeral sermon for the Archbishop of Armagh, 1663 (L. P. Smith, *op. cit.*, 40).

<sup>22</sup> Preface to *The Golden Grove* (L. P. Smith, *op. cit.*, 31).

precise about dates and facts, are based upon Howell's observations and have considerable narrative value as well as charm.<sup>23</sup>

His career as a professional writer began very late, but once started, the flow of his publications was incessant. His first book was *Dodona's Grove, or the Vocal Forest* (1640), with a second part in 1650. Here the gossipy clerk in Howell is controlled by the dreamy Celt, who "deeming it a flat and vulgar task to compile a plain downright story . . . hath under hieroglyphics, allegories, and emblems endeavored to diversify and enrich the matter."<sup>24</sup> That is, he tells the story of his own time in fantastic but easily penetrated symbolism, countries being represented by forests and individuals by trees. In his *Therologia, or the Parley of the Beasts* (1660), he employs animal symbolism instead:

Trees spake before, now the same strength of art  
Makes beasts to con the alphabet by heart.

These books were popular in their day. They were accompanied by a multitude of more frankly political or geographical pamphlets, including a "survey" of Venice and *A Perfect Description of the People and Country of Scotland* (1649), which is as vitriolic as any Cavalier could desire. More interesting to us is his *Instructions for Foreign Travel*, first printed in 1642 and later expanded. It is the earliest guide book in English, and carefully leads the reader, who is imagined as a young college graduate, through France, Spain, and Italy, and back to the Inns of Court in London. Howell had had all these experiences and is able to give much valuable information about customs and languages, interlarded with fervent warnings against papist and puritanical error. He was dependent upon his pen for his support and had to make thrifty use of his ideas. It is amusing to observe how often a point plainly stated in the letters is repeated with embellishment in *Dodona's Grove* and further expanded in the *Instructions*, where Howell often attempts the higher reaches of rhetoric. By the exacting standards of his age he is not a great writer of formal prose, but he can sometimes reach a high level, as in this sentence on the idea which Bishop Berkeley was later to immortalize in the line, "Westward the course of empire takes its way":

And as all other things by a kind of secret instinct of nature follow the motion of the sun, so it is observed that the arts and sciences, which are the greatest helps to civility, and all moral endowments as well as intellectual, have wheeled about and travelled in a kind of concomitant motion with that great luminary of heaven: they builded first amongst the Brahmins and Gymnosophists in India, then they blossomed amongst the Chaldeans and priests of Egypt, whence they came down the Nile and crossed over to Greece, and there they may be said to have borne ripe fruit, having taken such firm rooting and making so long a plantation in Athens and elsewhere: afterwards they found the way to Italy, and thence they clattered over the Alpian hills to visit Germany and France, whence

<sup>23</sup> See *The Familiar Letters of James Howell*, with an introduction by Agnes Repplier (2v, 1908). There is a brief selection, *Certain Letters of James Howell*, ed. Guy Holt (1928).

<sup>24</sup> Second part, 1650, p. 7.



the Britons with other north-west nations of the lower world fetched them over; and it is not improbable that the next flight they will make will be to the savages of the new discovered world, and so turn round and by this circular perambulation visit the Levantines again.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Instructions for Foreign Travel*, section 1 (ed. E. Arber, *English Reprints*, p. 14).—With Howell's *Instructions* may be associated the principal narratives of travel of the earlier Stuart period. Samuel Purchas (1577?-1626) continued the work of Richard Hakluyt, compiling from materials in manuscript or already published separately his huge *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrims* (4v, 1625; reprinted, 20v, Glasgow, 1905-1907). A representative selection is in *Narratives from Purchas His Pilgrims*, ed. H. G. Rawlinson (1931). Thomas Coryate (1577?-1617), a genial eccentric, told of his experiences through the length and breadth of Europe in the much ridiculed but lively and informative *Coryats Crudities Hastily Gobbled up in Five Months Travels* (1611; reprinted, 2v, Glasgow, 1905). William Lithgow, an ill-tempered but courageous Scot, expanded an earlier account of his travels into *A Total Discourse of Rare Adventures and Painful Peregrinations* (1632; reprinted, Glasgow, 1906). The *Itinerary* of Fynes Moryson (1566-1630) was originally written in Latin; parts were translated by the author and published in 1617; other portions of the translation were first published much later; see especially *Shakespeare's Europe: Unpublished Chapters of Fynes Moryson's Itinerary*, ed. Charles Hughes (1903). For George Sandys' *Relation of a Journey* (1615) see ch. x, note 9, below. Covering much the same ground as Sandys' narrative is *A Voyage into the Levant* (1636) by Sir Henry Blount (1602-1682). Sir Thomas Herbert (1606-1682) ventured even further afield and told his story in *Some Years Travels* (1634) which he expanded and spoiled with tedious moralizing in later editions; the best of the original matter is in his *Travels in Persia*, ed. Sir William Foster (1928). American exploration and colonization have their share of interest in the *True Travels, Adventures, and Observations* (1630) by Captain John Smith (1580-1631), a man famous in the history and legend of English expansion overseas. See his *Travels and Works*, ed. A. G. Bradley (2v, 1910). Other travel-narratives of the period will be found reprinted, or printed for the first time, in the *Publications* of the Hakluyt Society, in the *Broadway Travellers Series*, and in the *Argonaut Press Series*. See further S. C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose* (1937), ch. 1 and *passim*; R. R. Cawley, *The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama* (Boston, 1938) and *Unpathed Waters* (Princeton, 1940); Boies Penrose, *Urbane Travelers, 1591-1635* (Philadelphia, 1942).



## IX

### Seventeenth-Century Poetry: I. The Olympians

#### *The End of the Renaissance*

When the Renaissance ended in England is even harder to say than it is to say what it was, but the death of Spenser in 1599 is a convenient date. The removal of the last and greatest of the humanist poets happened at a time when for political and social reasons the Elizabethan spirit, which was synthetic and unifying, had given place to the spirit of the seventeenth century, which was analytical and disruptive. The strength of the insurgent movement is indicated by the popularity in the later 1590's of satire and epigram, evidenced by the work of Hall, Harington, Marston, Bastard, the two Davies<sup>1</sup>, and many others; <sup>1</sup> and still more by the repressive efforts of the authorities, who in 1599 issued a categorical anathema against such writing.<sup>2</sup>

Whether, as some recent investigators have assumed, there was in any formal sense a School of Night, consisting of Raleigh, Marlowe, Chapman, the mathematician Harriot and others, and dedicated to the study of dark and prohibited subjects, may perhaps be doubted; <sup>3</sup> but it is certain that these men knew each other well and were moved by a spirit more rebellious and questioning than that of the true Elizabethans. The poetry of the first half of the seventeenth century, unsurpassed in certain aspects, takes its origin from the work of the four great personalities discussed in this chapter. After them it splits into two bodies: on the one hand, the great variety of often exquisite singers thrown by the currents of change and war into one or another of the opposing parties; on the other hand, the lonely, single, and indivisible phenomenon of Milton.

Sir Walter Raleigh <sup>4</sup> (c. 1552-1618), the friend of Spenser and of Marlowe,

<sup>1</sup> E.g., Joseph Hall, *Virgideum Six Books* (1597); John Marston, *The Scourge of Villainy* (1598); Thomas Bastard, *Chrestoleros* (1598); see A. B. Grosart, *The Poems English and Latin of the Rev. Thomas Bastard* (*Occasional Issues*, xii, 1880); Sir John Davies, *Epigrams* (printed with Marlowe's elegies in several undated editions); Edward Guilpin, *Skialetheia, or a Shadow of Truth* (1598; facsimile ed., Oxford, 1931); John Weever, *Epigrams in the Oldest Cut and Newest Fashion* (1599, ed. R. B. McKerrow, 1911). On the above consult A. Davenport, "The Quarrel of the Satirists," *MLR*, xxxvii (1942), 123-130. For Sir John Harington's epigrams, which were printed later, see the edition of N. E. McClure (Philadelphia, 1926).

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this see, under date of June 1, 1599, *Stationers' Register*, ed. Arber, iii, 316. Cf. O. J. Campbell, *Comical Satyre and Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida"* (San Marino, 1938), ch. i.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. C. Bradbrook, *The School of Night, a Study in the Literary Relationships of Sir Walter Raleigh* (Cambridge, 1936).

<sup>4</sup> See *The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh*, edited by A. M. C. Latham (1929); E. K. Chambers, "The Disenchantment of the Elizabethans," in *Sir Thomas Wyatt and Some Collected Studies* (1933); E. C. Dunn, "Raleigh and the 'New' Poetry," in *The Literature of Shakespeare's England* (1936), pp. 140-163; T. Brooke, "Sir Walter Raleigh as Poet and Philosopher," *ELH*, v (1938), 93-112. There is a useful selection from his prose, ed. G. E. Hadow (Oxford, 1926). The lives of Raleigh by Milton Waldman (1928) and Edward Thompson (New Haven, 1926) are modern and well written.

may be said to have started the movement which led away from them. His poetry was never really published, and can now be only scantily and doubtfully recovered, but the best of it bears the impress of his great personality hardly less than do his other achievements. As a man of the court and a man of the wide world, he caught nuances of the impending change, and his acrid, questioning, close-packed lyrics, which the *Art of English Poesy* (1589) described as "most lofty, insolent, and passionate," have in them more of the seventeenth century than of the Renaissance. His longest extant poem, *The Eleventh and Last Book of the Ocean to Cynthia*, is probably but a fragment of the entire work<sup>5</sup> and badly lacks revision; but it is the most poignant valedictory that we have of the Elizabethan age, and is electrically charged with the macabre power of the Jacobean.

Sir  
Walter  
Raleigh

Raleigh's prose, which is much better preserved than his poetry, and was probably more carefully written, is of supreme grandeur, whether its purpose be, as in *The Truth of the Fight about the Isles of Azores* (1591), occasional and propagandist, or, as in *The History of the World* (1614), meditative and moral. Both in time and in merit Raleigh belongs among the first writers of impassioned English prose.<sup>6</sup>

Bacon stated the aesthetic position of Chapman very well when he wrote, "There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion."<sup>7</sup> This strange and most Olympian poet was five years older than Shakespeare or Marlowe, but he gave no hint of his powers till 1594, when his two sonorous "hymns" appeared in a volume called *The Shadow of Night*.<sup>8</sup> The only clear things about these invocations, addressed to Night and to her luminary, the Moon, are that they are deep and rousing poetry of a new kind, and that they are not written for the general public, but for a group of adepts or initiates. The preface, which is an open letter to Matthew Roydon,<sup>9</sup> indicates that three noblemen—Derby, Northumberland, and the "heir of Hunsdon"<sup>10</sup>—were in some degree sympathetic to Chapman's crusade. Though certainly obscure, these poems are the reverse of obscurantist. The argument seems to be that the world is degenerate and unjust. Light typifies the rule of organized society, the tyranny of shallow brains and daily routine, which is worse than unorganized chaos, while Night represents the regenerative principles, "silence, study, ease, and sleep." Of her Chapman says, "To thy black shades and desolation I consecrate my life," and in a passage of dark splendor he summons to their task all the enemies of the obvious:

George  
Chapman  
(1559-1634)

The  
Shadow  
of Night

<sup>5</sup> See, however, A. M. Buchan, "Raleigh's *Cynthia*—Facts or Legends," *MLQ*, 1 (1940). 461-474.

<sup>6</sup> See E. A. Strathmann, "The History of the World and Raleigh's Skepticism," *HLQ*, III (1940). 265-287; and "Sir Walter Raleigh on Natural Philosophy," *MLQ*, 1 (1940). 49-61.

<sup>7</sup> In the essay, "Of Beauty." See *Poems of George Chapman*, ed. P. B. Bartlett (1941).

<sup>8</sup> See R. W. Battenhouse, "Chapman's *The Shadow of Night*, an Interpretation," *SP*, xxxviii (1941). 584-608.

<sup>9</sup> Roydon was a poet whose contemporary fame was out of proportion to the unimportant remnants of his work that survive.

<sup>10</sup> Presumably George Carey, who became Baron Hunsdon in 1596, and as Lord Chamberlain (1597-1603) was the patron of Shakespeare's company.

All you possess'd with indepressed spirits,  
 Endued with nimble and aspiring wits,  
 Come, consecrate with me to sacred Night  
 Your whole endeavors and detest the light.  
 Sweet Peace's richest crown is made of stars,  
 Most certain guides of honor'd mariners:  
 No pen can anything eternal write,  
 That is not steep'd in humor of the Night.

Here one seems to pass as on a bridge from the luminosity of Marlowe to the twilight of Donne. The idea expressed, the artist's endless duty to reach after the ungraspable, is much the same as in Marlowe's "If all the pens that ever poets held"; but the expression, as usually in Chapman, is an anticipation of the manner of the so-called "metaphysicals." Each of these Hymns is provided with a prose "Gloss" such as accompanied *The Shepherds' Calendar*. The glosses do not much assist the modern reader, but signalize the propagandist purpose of the work.

Ovid's  
 Banquet  
 of Sense

Chapman's next poem, *Ovid's Banquet of Sense* (1595), is also prefaced by a letter to Roydon, in which he again states his attitude:

The profane multitude I hate, and only consecrate my strange poems to those searching spirits, whom learning hath made noble and nobility sacred . . . Obscurity, in affectation of words and indigested conceits, is pedantical and childish; but where it shroudeeth itself in the heart of his [i.e., its] subject, uttered with fitness of figure and expressive epithets, with that darkness will I still labor to be shadowed.

The purpose in this long narrative poem and in two shorter ones, *A Coronet for His Mistress Philosophy* and *The Amorous Zodiac*, is the purpose one observes in Donne's lyrics: to effect an intellectualizing of amatory verse. The handling of metre is masterful and varied,<sup>11</sup> and the poet's control of his matter is never in doubt; but these poems do not greatly engage the reader's interest.

There is rugged force and deep consciousness of intent in Chapman. As Swinburne said of his translations from the Greek: "No poet was ever less of a Greek in style or spirit. He enters the serene temples and handles the holy vessels of Hellenic art with the stride and the grasp of a high-handed and high-minded barbarian."<sup>12</sup> He must have appeared among the poeticules of Henslowe's play-patching factory as a Triton of the minnows, or as one of Spenser's "sea-shouldering whales." He was, by all the evidence, the rival poet to whose strange powers Shakespeare's *Sonnets* pay such tribute, and

<sup>11</sup> In *Ovid's Banquet* he employs a difficult nine-line stanza, riming *ababcdd*; in the *Coronet*, the Shakespearean sonnet with a notable number of feminine endings; in the *Amorous Zodiac*, a six-line stanza, *aabccb*.

<sup>12</sup> *Essay on the Poetical and Dramatic Works of George Chapman* (1875). The publication of Chapman's translation of Homer began in 1598 with *Seaven Bookes of the Iliades of Homere*, *Prince of Poets*, continued at intervals in other volumes, and culminated in *The Whole Works of Homer* (1616). The translation is edited in Vol. III of *The Works of George Chapman*, ed. R. H. Shepherd (3v, 1874-75), and can be had in other modern reprints such as the Temple Classics (4v, 1909).

he was the only Elizabethan poet who could meet Ben Jonson on his own learned ground and answer the latter's dogmatism with unperturbed "invective":

Great, learned, witty Ben, be pleased to light  
The world with that three-forked fire; nor fright  
All us, thy sublearn'd, with Luciferous boast  
That thou art *most* great, *most* learn'd, witty *most*  
Of all the kingdom, nay of all the earth! <sup>13</sup>

Jonson loved him, as he told Drummond; Donne borrowed from him; and Webster, when he drew up in the preface to *The White Devil* (1612) the list of his most admired colleagues, put Chapman first: "For mine own part, I have ever truly cherished my good opinion of other men's worthy labors, especially of that full and heightened style of Master Chapman..." To the end, however, he remained hard to understand, and the wonderful, Jove-like, portrait of him in old age bears the perfect motto, *Monscium evasi diem*, (I shunned the blabbing day). His command of figurative language is a great part of his style. Often it is baroque and rudely powerful; but many times also the long simile that he borrowed from Homer will light up dark places in his moody plays or irradiate for a moment even so obscure a poem as the *Hymnus in Cynthiam*:

As when a flock of school-boys, whom their mistress  
Held closely to their books, gets leave to sport,  
And then like toil-freed <sup>14</sup> deer, in headlong sort,  
With shouts and shrieks they hurry from the school:  
Some strow the woods, some swim the silver pool;  
All as they list to several pastimes fall,  
To feed their famish'd wantonness withal.

"In his merry humor," Drummond records of Ben Jonson, "he was wont to name himself The Poet." <sup>15</sup> Jonson was not the greatest of Elizabethan, or even of Jacobean, poets, and he knew it. He esteemed Donne the first poet in the world in some things, and his appreciation of Shakespeare is the most just and generous that we have from any writer of the age. But, as even those who began by abominating his bravado came to understand, Jonson is The Poet, the norm and center for the measurement of his fellows. He is so normal that, apart from the outstanding lyrics and plays, we do not easily recognize his greatness; but the greatness is in almost every line he wrote. The average line of Jonson, read, re-read, memorized, and lived with, will

Ben Jonson  
(1572-1637)

<sup>13</sup> *An Invective written by Mr. George Chapman against Mr. Ben Jonson.*

<sup>14</sup> I.e., freed from a snare.

<sup>15</sup> William Drummond's *Conversations with Jonson*. The standard edition of Jonson is that of Herford and Simpson, of which Vol. VII (Oxford, 1941) contains his masques. The best separate edition of his non-dramatic poetry is *The Poems of Ben Jonson*, ed. B. H. Newdigate (Oxford, 1936); a convenient small volume is *Songs and Lyrics by Ben Jonson* (Shakespeare Head Quartos, VIII, Oxford, 1937). Biographical writers have been much attracted to Jonson and have found it nearly impossible to make his life uninteresting. See S. A. Tannenbaum's *Concise Bibliography* (1938) and other works cited above, Part III, ch. III, n. 21, and also M. Eccles, "Jonson's Marriage," *RES*, XII (1936). 257-272.

assay higher and wear better than the more striking lines of easier poets. For him poetry *was* the criticism of life, and criticism could be no easy thing for author or for reader:

For though the Poet's matter Nature be,  
His Art doth give the fashion; and that he,  
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,  
..... and strike the second heat  
Upon the Muses' anvil.<sup>16</sup>

The reader of the *Epigrams*, *Forest*, and *Under-wood*<sup>17</sup> may be at first repelled by the products of this sweating Titan, who hammered his verses into their hard and shining felicity; but let him try the quality of the metal and workmanship, and most other men's poetry is likely to seem paltry. Even when Jonson is writing flattery to the fashionables of the court, he writes with his whole thinking mind and with proud assertion of the dignity of thought; as thus to the Countess of Rutland (*Forest*, xii):

Beauty, I know, is good, and blood is more;  
Riches thought most: but, Madame, think what store  
The world hath seen which all these had in trust,  
And now lie lost in their forgotten dust.  
It is the Muse alone can raise to heaven,  
And at her strong arm's end hold up, and even,  
The souls she loves;

or thus to the Earl of Dorset:

Yet we must more than move still, or go on:  
We must accomplish. 'Tis the last key-stone  
That makes the arch. The rest that there were put  
Are nothing till *that* comes to bind and shut.  
Then stands it a triumphal mark! then men  
Observe the strength, the height, the why, and when,  
It was erected; and still walking under  
Meet some new matter to look up and wonder!

Or note how Jonson can make his reason sing in this discussion of two ways of love, and note how subtly the almost over-sweetness of the melody is curbed by the run-on verses and occasionally inexact rimes:

The thing they here call love is blind desire,  
Arm'd with bow, shafts, and fire;  
Inconstant like the sea, of whence 'tis born,  
Rough, swelling, like a storm:  
With whom sails, rides on a surge of fear,  
And boils, as if he were

<sup>16</sup> *To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and What He Hath Left Us.*

<sup>17</sup> Jonson's miscellaneous poems were grouped under these headings in the Folio edition of his *Works* (1616).



In a continual tempest. Now true love  
 No such effects doth prove;  
 That is an essence far more gentle, fine,  
 Pure, perfect, nay divine;  
 It is a golden chain let down from heaven,  
 Whose links are bright and even,  
 That falls like sleep on lovers and combines  
 The soft and sweetest minds  
 In equal knots. This bears no brands nor darts  
 To murder different hearts,  
 But in a calm and godlike unity  
 Preserves community;

or in this loveliest of definitions of truth:

Truth is the trial of itself  
 And needs no other touch;  
 And purer than the purest gold,  
 Refine it ne'er so much.  
 It is the life and light of love,  
 That sun that ever shineth,  
 And spirit of that special grace,  
 That faith and love defineth.

There is an Augustan urbanity in many of Jonson's smaller poems which none of his contemporaries could equal; for instance, in his verse letters to Donne and Drayton, and to the "one that asked to be sealed of the Tribe of Ben," in the 101st *Epigram*, inviting a friend to supper;<sup>18</sup> and particularly in the second and third poems of *The Forest*, which show how much manners had improved in the century since Barclay's *Satires*.<sup>19</sup>

No one in his age could more tenderly express true sorrow. The epitaph "on my first daughter" (*Epigram xxii*) is a noble thing, and the lines on his dead son (*Epigram xlv*) are nobler still:

Farewell, thou child of my right hand and joy!

Rest in soft peace, and, ask'd, say here doth lie  
 Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry.

It was Jonson who wrote the exquisite stanzas on the dead boy actor, Salathiel (or Solomon)<sup>20</sup> Pavy (*Epigram cxx*), which perhaps no other writer of the time could or would have written, and the epitaph on the girl, "Elizabeth, L. H.," which has the lines,

Underneath this stone doth lie  
 As much beauty as could die.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> This can be well compared with Milton's sonnet to Mr. Lawrence (1656).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. above, Part 1, ch. iv.

<sup>20</sup> See G. E. Bentley, "A Good Name Lost. Ben Jonson's Lament for S. P.," *LTLS*, May 30, 1942, p. 276.

<sup>21</sup> *Epigram cxxiv*. Newdigate suggests that the initials stand for Lady Hatton, but she was still living when the epigram was published. Jonson complimented her in a lyric in the masque of *The Gypsies Metamorphosed* (1621).



This, probably, even more than the now better-known lyrist of the song books, was the Jonson whom his juniors accepted as their unapproachable leader. He had a sting, of course, but in his nondramatic works employed it less often and less effectively than is supposed. He did not regard himself as a love poet. He had attempted, he says in the first poem of *The Forest*, but the god of love fled him,

and again  
Into my rimes could ne'er be got  
By any art. Then wonder not  
That, since, my numbers are so cold,  
When Love is fled and I grow old.

He admits his "mountain belly" and his "rocky face," and a weight but two pounds less than that attributed in later times to the corpulent Prince Regent.<sup>22</sup> But love songs were demanded by the Jacobeans, in their plays and in the masques which Jonson's art received as ephemeral trifles and made immortal.

The unwieldy elephant,  
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed  
His lithe proboscis.<sup>23</sup>

Out of materials no less diverse than his learning he fabricated songs which are as purely Elizabethan and as living today as anything their age produced. One of the earliest is the stately hymn to Queen Elizabeth in *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), perhaps the most classically perfect lyric in English: "Queen and huntress, chaste and fair." Into the climactic scene of *Volpone* he introduced one of his marvelous adaptations of Catullus,

Come, my Celia, let us prove,  
While we can the sports of love;  
Time will not be ours for ever.

Suns that set may rise again;  
But if once we lose this light,  
'Tis with us perpetual night.

He bewitched some passages of Greek prose into the cadences of "Drink to me only with thine eyes," and put into a lover's mouth in *The Devil Is an Ass* (1616) a stanza which his "tribe" seem to have taken (and well they might) as their particular model of lyric excellence,

Have you seen but a bright lily grow,  
Before rude hands have touch'd it?  
Have you mark'd but the fall of the snow,  
Before the soil hath smutch'd it?

<sup>22</sup> *Under-wood*, "To Mr. Arthur Squib" (Newdigate, p. 167), "Full twenty stone, of which I lack two pound," i.e., 278 lbs. Cf. Byron, "Though Ireland starve, great George weighs twenty stone" (*Don Juan*, VIII, st. 126).

<sup>23</sup> *Paradise Lost*, IV, 345 f.

The lyric richness of Jonson's masques is enormous. In these one-night spectacles, which Bacon called "but toys," he buried gems of song now seldom uncovered. They range from the Skeltonic and ribald ditties of *The Gypsies Metamorphosed* to the organ notes with which descending Pallas addressed the court in the year when Overbury's murderers were being brought to trial:<sup>24</sup>

*The Songs  
in Jonson's  
Masques*

Look, look, rejoice and wonder  
That you, offending mortals, are  
(For all your crimes) so much the care  
Of him that bears the thunder.

Jove can endure no longer,  
Your great ones should your less invade;  
Or that your weak, though bad, be made  
A prey unto the stronger.

Jonson was the pattern for the Restoration singers, and has been well described as the real father of the Augustan Age;<sup>25</sup> but his influence was broader than this, for he was master also in his odes of an intricate and entrancing music which hardly reappears in English poetry before the nineteenth century. If one seeks a "source" for the stanza and mood of Wordsworth's immortality ode, one will scarcely find it, tracing back, till one comes to such a stanza as this in Jonson:

*Influence  
of Jonson's  
Lyrics*

It is not growing like a tree  
In bulk doth make man better be,  
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,  
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere.  
A lily of a day  
Is fairer far in May:  
Although it fall and die that night,  
It was the plant and flower of light.  
In small proportions we just beauties see,  
And in short measures life may perfect be.<sup>26</sup>

Ben Jonson was not the greatest poet of his time, no doubt; but under the impact of his colossal mind and art critics have, in every succeeding age, found this hard to believe.

Few men can ever have had as much poetry within them as John Donne<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *The Golden Age Restored* (1615).

<sup>25</sup> F. E. Schelling, "Ben Jonson and the Classical School," *PMLA*, xiii (1898). 221-249; reprinted in *Shakespeare and Demi-Science* (Philadelphia, 1927).

<sup>26</sup> Ode to Cary and Morison in *Under-wood*, Newdigate, p. 180.

<sup>27</sup> Concerning Donne there has been a great deal of literature and of dogma recently. See Geoffrey Keynes, *A Bibliography of Dr. John Donne* (2ed., Cambridge, 1932); William White, *John Donne since 1900: A Bibliography of Periodical Articles* (Boston, 1942). The standard edition of Donne's poems is that of Sir Herbert Grierson (2v, Oxford, 1912; new ed., abridged in one vol., 1929). *The Complete Poems of John Donne*, ed. R. E. Bennett (Chicago, 1942) contains new material. *John Donne: Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*, ed. John Hayward (1930), is a convenient volume; and F. W. Payne's *John Donne and his Poetry* (1926) is a useful brief introduction to the poet. Much information is contained in *A Garland for John Donne*, ed. Theodore Spencer (1931), and in T. Spencer and Mark Van Doren, *Studies in*

*John Donne* (1572-1631), or suffered as much obstruction in expressing it. In his work the Pierean flood is no clear spring; it is more like a Yellowstone geyser: over-heated, turbid, explosive, and far from pure. He might almost have been a Dante; but he lived in the reign of James I and was a hanger-on in one of the most flippant coteries of modern times. So was Ben Jonson; but Jonson, with less, doubtless, of the divine spark, had a sturdier nature, and he found anchorage in the verities of art. Donne never did. Some grand lines in his third *Satire* justify the man who seeks by indirections to find directions out:

On a huge hill,  
Cragged and steep, Truth stands, and he that will  
Reach her, about must, and about must go,  
And what the hill's suddenness resists, win so;  
Yet strive so that before age, death's twilight,  
Thy soul rest, for none can work in that night.

Such was Donne's method, but, in his secular poems at least, he seldom won to the highest truth or to his soul's rest. He committed unpardonable sins against both the "centers," as he calls them, of his intellectual being: his reason and his faith. The poem just alluded to, the elegy on the death of Prince Henry in 1612, contains a few noble lines—like those that estimate the moral value of thoughts about the dead prince, which are

Our soul's best baiting, and mid-period,  
In her long journey of considering God;

but it also exemplifies the faults which the student of Donne must begin by learning to discount. According to Drummond, Donne told Jonson that he wrote this piece "to match Sir Edward Herbert<sup>28</sup> in obscurity." Grierson adds: "The obscurity of the poem is not so obvious as its tasteless extravagance."<sup>29</sup> The two qualities, however, bud from a single root; so forceful a thinker would not be so often obscure, if he were not striving to write with more apparent emphasis than he feels. When Donne's patroness, the Countess of Bedford, lost by death a female cousin to whom she had been much attached, the poet addressed the countess in another tasteless and obscure poem which begins

*Metaphysical Poetry* (1939). Consult also G. Williamson, *The Donne Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass., 1930); C. M. Coffin, *John Donne and the New Philosophy* (1937); J. B. Douds, "Donne's Technique of Dissonance," *PMLA*, LII (1937), 1051-1061; and A. R. Benham, "The Myth of John Donne the Rake," *PQ*, XX (1941), 465-473. The *Life and Letters* of Donne by Edmund Gosse (2v, 1899) is still of use. The following works, dealing with Donne and kindred poets, should be consulted: J. F. Bennett, *Four Metaphysical Poets: Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Crashaw* (Cambridge, 1934); J. B. Leishman, *The Metaphysical Poets: Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne* (Oxford, 1934), and H. C. White, *Metaphysical Poets* (1936). Special aspects are treated in R. C. Bald, *Donne's Influence in English Literature* (Morpeeth, 1932); M. A. Rugoff, *Donne's Imagery* (1939); W. R. Moses, *The Metaphysical Conceit in the Poems of John Donne* (Nashville, 1941); R. L. Sharp, *From Donne to Dryden, the Revolt against Metaphysical Poetry* (Chapel Hill, 1940).

<sup>28</sup> George Herbert's brother, later Lord Herbert of Cherbury; see ch. vi, above.

<sup>29</sup> Grierson, *op. cit.*, II, 205.

You that are she and you, that's double she,  
In her dead face half of yourself shall see.

The meaning can be made out, but the satisfaction of his mental ingenuity in so doing is the only reward the reader will receive. It was, for the circle to which Donne addressed these words, enough.

In the fourth act of *Cynthia's Revels* (written in 1600) Jonson portrays a group of just such courtly ladies and gentlemen as were the usual recipients of Donne's poetical epistles, amusing themselves with games of verbal dexterity. One of the games is "Substantives and Adjectives," in which the players ingeniously fit the adjectives "odoriferous," "popular," "humble," "white-livered," "barbarous," "Pythagorical," and "well-spoken," to the substantive, which happens to be "breeches." Often Donne's "wit" and "conceits" have only a purpose of this kind, though elaborated with such more than Jonsonian subtlety as to tempt one to think them seriously oracular. A sentence near the beginning of the fifth *Satire* reads:

If all things be in all,  
As I think, since all, which were, are, and shall  
Be, be made of the same elements:  
Each thing, each thing implies or represents.

It is surprising to discover that this makes sense and is part of a clever, if rather ribald, attack on the court; but the only reasons for such style—at least till it had grown a habit—are to make it appear more thoughtful than it is, and to give the reader a quite unpoetic amusement in untangling it.

Donne's sins against faith are more serious than those against reason, for they mar greater poems. The wonderful *Songs and Sonnets*—fifty-five uncut gems as unique, in their different way, as Browning's fifty *Men and Women*—raise inevitable questions about the literary integrity of the author. The first of these poems, *The Good-Morrow*, lauds pagan love as the be-all and end-all of existence. The next two, "Go and catch a falling star" and *Woman's Constancy*, are as crassly cynical as they are brilliant in wit. The fourth, "I have done one braver thing," is a Paul-and-Virginia pastel. The fifth, "Busy old fool, unruly Sun!" returns magnificently to amorous paganism; and the next is *The Indifferent*, with its astringent motto, "I can love any, so she be not true." No theory of dramatic purpose or different dates will account artistically for this emotional welter. Donne was the sort of man whose purest depths could not be stirred without bringing up also a good deal of obscenity and inconsequence. They are all dumped together, often in the same poem, as in *The Relic*, which opens with two solemn lines,

Donne's  
Songs and  
Sonnets

When my grave is broke up again,  
Some second guest to entertain;

then plummets into the mire in a parenthesis,

(For graves have learn'd that womanhead,  
To be to more than one a bed)

and at once mounts to the zenith:

And he that digs it spies  
A bracelet of bright hair about the bone.

In the third (and last) stanza the poet moralizes:

First, we lov'd well and faithfully,  
Yet knew not what we lov'd, nor why.  
Difference of sex no more we knew  
Than our guardian angels do.

This innocence does not sit well. If Donne's guardian angel learned as much of sex as the author of the *Songs and Sonnets* knew, his fittest comment would have been that of the devil Pug,<sup>30</sup> who visited the London drawing-rooms: "You talk of a university! Why, hell is a grammar-school to this!"

Donne's  
Anniver-  
saries

The accent that Donne deserved hanging for not keeping is as much mental as metrical.<sup>31</sup> His bursts of energy and insight lack sustaining poetic faith, and after them he falls back frequently upon verbal jugglery, which is not poetry, but charmed the ingenious in its own day and does so even now. The *Anniversaries* in memory of Elizabeth Drury (1611, 1612), the only extensive body of Donne's poetry printed in his lifetime, had enormous influence. If these poems (three in all, aggregating 1100 lines) are not quite, as Jonson called them, "profane and full of blasphemies,"<sup>32</sup> they are at least poetically untruthful, whether as records of what the death of the fifteen-year-old daughter of one of the wealthiest men in England signified for Donne, or as statements of a cosmic pessimism on the theme, "How ugly a monster the world is!"<sup>33</sup> Less frequently here than in the *Songs and Sonnets* the great lines blaze, but their occasional brilliance is hardly less; e.g., in the passage on Judgment Day,

These hymns, thy issue, may increase so long  
As till God's great *Venite* change the song,

or the metaphor for death:

Think, then, my soul, that death is but a groom,  
Who brings a taper to the outward room,  
Whence thou spyest first a little glimmering light,  
And after brings it nearer to thy sight.

Donne was never incapable of these glories. Even the unctuous direct flattery of little Elizabeth will sometimes be purged by a flamelike couplet:

Whose twilights were more clear than our midday,  
Who dreamt devoutlier than most use to pray;

and even the "ingenious, tasteless poem" (as Grierson calls it) which Donne found it profitable to write on the death of his patroness's brother, Lord

<sup>30</sup> In Jonson's play, *The Devil Is an Ass* (1616), iv. i.

<sup>31</sup> Drummond reports Jonson to have said "that Donne for not keeping of accent deserved hanging." For a reply to this criticism see Arnold Stein, "Donne's Prosody," *PMLA*, lxx (1944), 373-397.

<sup>32</sup> Conversations with Drummond.

<sup>33</sup> *Anatomy of the World*, line 326.

Harington, in 1614 deviates happily into telling how a prisoner, sentenced to execution the next morning,

Doth practice dying by a little sleep;

or more dialectically, how an angel descends, faster than thought, from heaven to earth; or more baroquely, how God on the last day reassembles the perfect bodies of two cannibals, one of whom has consumed the other.

What this most metaphysical of poets chiefly lacked was a little real philosophy, an ability to come to terms with his world and trust his own reason and his faith—in fact, what Wordsworth called natural piety, and what Shakespeare, Milton, and Spenser in such great measure possessed. It may be an error to regard Donne as an anti-Spenser. In some aspects he appears almost as a Spenser *manqué*: for example, in the unfinished but interesting *Progress of the Soul*,<sup>34</sup> on the theme of metempsychosis, for which he invented a narrative, ten-line stanza, ending like Spenser's stanza in an alexandrine, and in which he displays unsuspected vivacity as a storyteller; and particularly in his three epithalamia, of which the best is the earliest and the one that most closely follows the Spenserian model in handling the refrain and interlinked rimes.<sup>35</sup> One might imagine the young Donne offering these pieces to the scrutiny of Spenser, and Spenser replying: "Master Donne, you will never be a poet." In which hypothetical case the elder poet would have been wrong, but not indefensibly so.

It was probably Donne's reputation as a preacher that won disproportionate attention for his religious poetry, which in bulk amounts to little more than an eighth of his total verse, and, with two or three great exceptions, is less important than George Herbert's. Donne's "holy" *Sonnets* number twenty-six, with two others which are dedicatory. Composed over a period of many years, both before and after his ordination in 1615, they vary greatly in value, but very little in the technical form, which (in distinction from Herbert's sonnets) is always the Petrarchan.<sup>36</sup> They show little piety and are remarkably egocentric, dealing mainly with Donne's two phobias: his sense of personal unworthiness and the terrors of Judgment Day. Some of the conceits are as astonishing as those in the *Songs and Sonnets*.<sup>37</sup> One of these sonnets, No. vii of the second series, rises easily above all the rest:

*Donne's  
Religious  
Poems*

At the round earth's imagin'd corners blow  
Your trumpets, Angels! and arise, arise  
From death, you numberless infinities  
Of souls, and to your scatter'd bodies go.

Next to this, probably, ranks No. x:

<sup>34</sup> Not to be confused with the Second Anniversary on Elizabeth Drury, which was given the same title. The fragment referred to is a much earlier poem.

<sup>35</sup> *Epithalamion Made at Lincoln's Inn*; Grierson, I, 141-144.

<sup>36</sup> The dedicatory Sonnet to Mrs. Herbert follows the Shakespearean form. These are, of course, true sonnets, as the earlier *Songs and Sonnets* were not. For discussion see H. P. A. Fausset, *The Holy Sonnets of John Donne* (1938).

<sup>37</sup> Note, for example, the last four lines of Sonnet xviii.



Death, be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so,

which invites comparison with Shakespeare's No. CXLVI:

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth.

*The Litany*, written while Donne was still a layman (c. 1609), is a series of petitions, effectively set in a metrical form that can be illustrated by the most characteristic stanza:

When senses, which thy soldiers are,  
We arm against thee, and they fight for sin;  
When want, sent but to tame, doth war  
And work despair a breach to enter in;  
When plenty, God's image and seal,  
Makes us idolatrous,  
And love it, not him whom it should reveal;  
When we are mov'd to seem religious  
Only to vent wit: Lord deliver us!

There is a certain interest in the subtlety of *The Cross* and *Riding Westward*; but it would not be necessary to say more of Donne as a religious poet if he had not, when on the point of death, transcended himself in a "hymn" which at last fuses into harmony the strange riches of his tortured mind. It is, of course, the *Hymn to God, My God, in My Sickness*, which begins thus:

Since I am coming to that holy room,  
Where, with Thy choir of saints for evermore,  
I shall be made Thy music: as I come,  
I tune the instrument here at the door,  
And what I must do then think here before.  
Whilst my physicians by their love are grown  
Cosmographers, and I their map, who lie  
Flat on this bed, that by them may be shown  
That this is my South-west discovery  
That this is my South-west discovery  
*Per fretum febris*, by these straights to die.

Had Donne written often thus—as Dr. Johnson said of Gray—"it had been vain to blame and useless to praise him."

# X

## Seventeenth-Century Poetry: II. The Moral Tradition

The extent to which poetry,<sup>1</sup> at about the time of *Hamlet*, was being sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought is evident in the works of John Davies of Hereford<sup>2</sup> (1565-1618). At the close of the long sonnet sequence in his *Wit's Pilgrimage* (1605), he says:

Thus far may speculation help a wit,  
Unapt to love, to write of love's estate.

This amiable but most verbose Welshman acquired prestige and a remarkable acquaintance with the nobility through his prowess as a writing-master in an age when handwriting was an art. His first poetical publications—*Mirum in Modum*, or "a glimpse of God's glory and the soul's shape" (1602), and *Microcosmos* (1603), the latter with elaborate dedications to the new royal family—show Davies' "speculation" flowing almost endlessly through moral, metaphysical, and psychological channels,<sup>3</sup> with a digression in *Microcosmos* into the historical field popularized by Daniel and Drayton. *The Holy Rood, or Christ's Cross* (1609) is another religious-metaphysical work. Davies, who is ingenious but genuinely pious, prefers intricate patterns both for his rimes and his thoughts. He has little wit, and his collection of epigrams, *The Scourge of Folly* (1611), is by no means his best work, though the reference it contains to Shakespeare and other contemporaries has made it his best known.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Several of the anthologies and critical works cited for Part II, ch. I cover also the field of the present chapter and the next two. To them should be added H. J. Massingham, *A Treasury of Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (1919); A. C. Judson, *Seventeenth-Century Lyrics* (Chicago, 1927); H. J. C. Grierson and G. Bullough, *The Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse* (Oxford, 1934); Norman Ault, *Seventeenth-Century Lyrics* (1928) and *A Treasury of Unfamiliar Lyrics* (1938); and L. B. Marshall, *Rare Poems of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1936).

<sup>2</sup> *Complete Works*, ed. A. B. Grosart (2v, 1878).

<sup>3</sup> He seems indebted to *The French Academy* (Part II, 1594), translated from P. de la Primaudaye. See R. L. Anderson, "A French Source for John Davies of Hereford's System of Psychology," *PQ*, vi (1927), 57-66.

<sup>4</sup> Tolerable reformatory verse, sometimes enlivened by details of social conduct, is found in John Lane's *Tom Tell-troth's Message* (1600; ed. F. J. Furnivall, *New Shakspeare Soc.*, 1876), and in Henry Hutton's *Folly's Anatomy* (1619; ed. E. F. Rimbault, *Percy Soc.*, 1842). Christopher Lever's two long poems in easy rime royal, *A Crucifix* and *Queen Elizabeth's Tears* (both printed in 1607; repr. A. B. Grosart, *Fuller Worthies Library*, III, 1872), deserve respect. The former is moral psychoanalysis, the latter a descant on Elizabeth's troubles under Queen Mary. There is less morality and more interest in the anonymous *Pasquil's Nightcap* (1612), published by the enterprising Thomas Thorpe and sometimes ascribed to Nicholas Breton, and in its companion piece, *Pasquil's Palinodia* (1619), which may be by William Fennor.

Sylvester's  
Translation  
of *Du Bartas*

Ethical poetry in England received a great impulse from the work of the French Huguenot soldier-poet, Guillaume de Salluste, Seigneur du Bartas (1544-1590), whose "heavenly muse" Spenser had been quick to praise.<sup>5</sup> Sidney began a translation, now lost; King James—then James VI of Scotland—published versions of *Du Bartas*; and numerous other interpreters in English and Latin sprang up, all of whom were eclipsed by Joshua Sylvester (1563-1618), a plain Kentishman whose career as a wool-merchant and translator somewhat resembles that of Caxton. Sylvester has independent merit as sonneteer and lyricist, but his name lives by reason of his free and homely rendering of *Du Bartas' Divine Weeks and Works*, first printed in full in 1605 and many times reprinted during the following half-century.<sup>6</sup> The young Milton must have known and liked this book, which covers much the same material as *Paradise Lost*, though in a style so different as to preclude serious comparisons.<sup>7</sup> Sylvester has no dignity at all. Like his original, he is often tedious and sometimes flat, but as a whole his version still deserves to rank among the most readable of long poems and liveliest of seventeenth-century translations. In manner he probably derived something from Harington's version of Ariosto (1591). He abounds in colloquialisms, quaint realistic digressions, and polysyllabic rimes that seem to be jesting at sublimity; but Dryden<sup>8</sup> was too severe in his rebuke of Sylvester's description of the powers of winter,

To crystallize the Baltic ocean,  
To glaze the lakes, and bridle up the floods,  
And periwig with wool the bald-pate woods.

If this be abominable fustian, as Dryden says, it is yet rather charming. Sylvester never wanted the natural touch. When Eve has made Adam a garment of feathers, the following scene occurs. How domestic and un-translated it seems!

"Sweetheart," quoth she, and then she kisseth him,  
"My love, my life, my bliss, my joy, my gem,  
My soul's dear soul, take in good part, I pray thee,  
This pretty present that I gladly give thee."  
"Thanks, my dear all," quoth Adam then, "for this";  
And with three kisses he requites her kiss.

One deals with lechery, the other with drunkenness. Both employ the same eight-line stanza (*ababccdd*) and are reprinted in Grosart's *Occasional Issues*, iv (1877). John Andrewes' attempt to combine satire and religion in *The Anatomy of Baseness* (1615; ed. Grosart, *Fuller Worthies Library*, II, 1871) is a work of no distinction; nor are the moral poems of Gervase Markham, e.g., *The Poem of Poems, or Sion's House* (1596). However, Charles Fitzgeffrey's swan song, *The Blessed Birthday* (Oxford, 1634), in admirable couplet verse, is better poetry than his much earlier elegy on Drake (see above, Part II, ch. II, n. 42).

<sup>5</sup> In the *Envoy to The Ruins of Time*.

<sup>6</sup> See A. B. Grosart, *Complete Works of Josuah Sylvester* (2v, 1880); and a convenient abridgment by T. W. Haight, *The Divine Weeks of Josuah Sylvester* (Waukesha, Wis., 1908).

<sup>7</sup> See G. C. Taylor, *Milton's Use of Du Bartas* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934).

<sup>8</sup> In the dedication of *The Spanish Friar* (1681).

Then on he puts his painted garment new,  
 And peacock-like himself doth often view,  
 Looks on his shadow, and in proud amaze  
 Admires the hand that had the art to cause  
 So many several parts to meet in one,  
 To fashion thus the quaint mandilion.<sup>9</sup>

George Wither<sup>10</sup> (1588-1667), whose long life extended from the defeat of the Armada to the Great Fire of London, was a manly poet and intelligent social critic. Though by birth a member of the Hampshire county aristocracy and in youth a fervent subject of King James, he gravitated toward Puritanism and became in the end one of the chief writers of that party and a major in the Parliamentary army. His poems give a clear picture of what an honest man in this position saw and felt. The great hindrance to his fame is his unfortunate prolixity, which causes his *Juvenilia* alone (first collected in 1622) to fill 939 pages in the Spenser Society edition.

George  
 Wither

After two years at Oxford, of which he gives an excellent account,<sup>11</sup> but where, as he says elsewhere, "ungentle Fate allowed me not to be a Graduate," he pursued the study of law in London and developed a sincere loathing for the vices of the court and city. Two of his first publications, however, were of courtly type: *Prince Henry's Obsequies* (1612), consisting mainly of forty-six adequate sonnets of Shakespearean form, and *Epithalamia* on the marriage in 1613 of the Princess Elizabeth, who was the patroness of both him and Quarles. But in *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, which went through four editions in 1613, the moralist appeared. "Here," he says,

I will teach my rough satiric rimes  
 To be as mad and idle as the times.

This long work in very fluent riming couplets is divided into two "books." The sixteen satires in Book 1, though strong in denunciation of the various passions that deprave man, are safely general. The most interesting passage is the well-told anecdote of the man marooned on a piece of floating ice

<sup>9</sup> Grosart, I. 124. (A mandilion is a loose coat.) Compare the French original in *Works of Du Bartas*, ed. Holmes, Lyons, and Linker, III (1940). 78. Another pious poet and influential translator, who wrote under the special favor of Charles I, is George Sandys (1578-1644), praised by Dryden as "the best versifier of the former age" and by Fuller as "spriteful, vigorous, and masculine." His chastened version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, printed in 1626, was largely prepared while Sandys was holding the post of Treasurer with the new Virginia Company in Jamestown, and has been noted as the first literary work of the English settlers in America (See R. B. Davis, "Early Editions of George Sandys's *Ovid*," *Papers, Bibl. Soc. of America*, xxxv (1941). 255-276). It is in graceful and not unforceful riming couplets, as are Sandys' long paraphrase of the Book of Job (1638) and his copiously annotated translation of Grotius' Latin tragedy, *Christ's Passion* (1640). His most praised work was his paraphrase of the Psalms of David (1636), in a variety of metres, for which Henry Lawes wrote music. Most interesting to modern readers is a much earlier work in prose, *A Relation of a Journey begun An. Dom. 1610* (publ., 1615), which records the author's observations in Italy, Greece, and the Orient. See S. C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose* (1937), pp. 41, etc.

<sup>10</sup> There is no convenient modern edition of Wither. References are to the Spenser Society edition (1871-1880). Cf. J. M. French, "Four Scarce Poems of George Wither," *Huntington Library Bull.*, II (1931). 91-121; and, for a pleasant appraisal of the poet Charles Lamb's essay "On the Poetical Works of George Wither."

<sup>11</sup> In the prefatory poem called "The Occasion of This Work," Spenser Soc. ed., pp. 29 f.

during the recent "hard frost" and almost sucked into the vortex at London Bridge. Book II, "Of the Vanity, Inconstancy, Weakness and Presumption of Men," is more circumstantial. Wither defied the nobles of the court:

I'll tell the ills you do,  
And put my name for witness thereunto.  
Then 'tis but fetching me *ad Magistratum*,  
And laying to me *Scandalum Magnatum*.

He proceeds to use strong language of the new knights, vain preachers, dishonest lawyers, of the universities, where

Fair colleges are full of foul abuses,

and of contemporary effeminacy. Near the end there is a rousing invitation to arms and denunciation of the truce with Spain. Though this thoroughgoing criticism is somewhat qualified by an ironic laudation of the Earl of Salisbury ("that great mighty peer that died lately") and warm praise of contemporary drama and modern poets,<sup>12</sup> it is not altogether surprising that the poet was incarcerated for several months in the Marshalsea prison. He seems to have been far from disheartened by that outcome; for he employed the hours of his captivity in penning a long satire dedicated to King James<sup>13</sup> and, what is more important, *The Shepherd's Hunting*, "being certain eclogues written during the time of the author's imprisonment in the Marshalsea" (1615). In these five pastorals Wither, under the name of Philarete (lover of virtue), allegorically justifies the *Abuses Stript and Whipt* in discourse with his friend Willy (William Browne of Tavistock)<sup>14</sup> and other shepherds. It is the poet's *apologia*, remarkably light-hearted for a prisoner. The pentameter couplets are in places varied by tetrameter and interspersed with lyrics.

Wither's next work, *Fidelia* (1615) is a long "elegiacal epistle," that is, an Ovidian verse letter of complaint from the heroine to her "unconstant friend," prettier but more diffuse than the similar works of Daniel and Drayton. The pastoral note is continued, very pleasingly indeed, in *Fair-Virtue, The Mistress of Philarete* (1622), which contains the choicest of Wither's lyrics.<sup>15</sup> In the previous year (1621) Wither had returned to satire in pentameter couplets and had also paved the way for his emblem poetry by publishing *Wither's Motto: nec habeo, nec careo, nec curo* ("Neither Have I, nor Want I, nor Care I"). The handsome pictorial title-page visualizes the motto and is explained in a poem on the facing page, while the main work develops in over two thousand lines the attitude to life that is thus

<sup>12</sup> Spenser Soc. ed., pp. 289-293.

<sup>13</sup> It is subscribed, "Your Majesty's most loyal subject, and yet prisoner in the Marshalsey." Cf. J. M. French, "George Wither in Prison," *PMLA*, XLV (1930), 959-966.

<sup>14</sup> Wither, under the name of Roget, had contributed to Browne's collection of eclogues, *The Shepherd's Pipe* (1614). Richard Brathwait (1588-1673) imitated Wither both in satire and in pastoral; e.g., in Brathwait's *A Strappado for the Devil* (1615) and *Nature's Embassy* (1621).

<sup>15</sup> The best known of them, "Shall I wasting in despair," is found here, but had also appeared previously as an addition to the 1619 edition of *Fidelia*.

summarized. Thirty thousand copies are said to have been at once sold, and Wither was again for a short time in the Marshalsea.

These are what Wither called his *Juvenilia*. Of the eighty-six works which by his own account in 1660<sup>16</sup> he had composed the only others that require notice are his *Collection of Emblems, Ancient and Modern*, which appeared in the same year as Quarles's *Emblems*<sup>17</sup> (1635), and his enormous verse narrative of the London plague of 1625, entitled *Britain's Remembrancer*<sup>18</sup> (1628). Wither remained voluntarily in London through the plague, and in Canto 3 rehearses the motives which led him to do so. His eye-witness account is of real value.<sup>19</sup>

Born of a good family in Essex and educated at Christ's College in Cambridge, Francis Quarles<sup>20</sup> (1592-1644) became vehemently royalist in sympathy, whereas Wither, with a similar social background, was Parliamentary. Both began their poetic careers as protégés of James I's daughter, the Princess Elizabeth. Quarles almost rivaled Wither in copiousness, and equalled him in popularity. His themes are strikingly unlike those usually associated with the Cavalier writers, for which a reason may be found in his service, between 1620 and 1629, as secretary to Archbishop Ussher, famous for his effort to fix the precise chronology of events in the Old Testament.

Francis  
Quarles

Quarles's first poem, *A Feast for Worms, Set Forth in a Poem of the History of Jonah* (1620), was followed by similar biblical narratives in pentameter couplets: *Hadassa, or the History of Queen Ester*; *Job Militant*; and *The History of Samson*. The inspiration is from Du Bartas, and the method is to interpolate pious "meditations" between brief sections of narrative, whereby each poem is drawn out to very considerable length. *Sion's Elegies* (1624) is a poetical paraphrase of the prophet Jeremiah, and *Sion's Sonnets* (1625), in couplets like the rest, is a version of the Song of Solomon. *Divine Fancies* (1632) contains four books of moral epigrams, many biblical, but many also dealing with contemporary social conditions in the spirit of Wither's satire.<sup>21</sup> In *Argalus and Parthenia* (1629) he turned for inspiration to Sidney's *Arcadia* and attained equal popularity.

In 1635, the year of publication also of Wither's different book of similar title, Quarles produced his most permanently popular work, the *Emblems*, which has been called the most popular book of verse in the seventeenth

<sup>16</sup> In his *Fides Anglicana* of that year.

<sup>17</sup> Wither's emblem book is a very handsome volume, though it quite failed to achieve the popularity of Quarles's. Each emblem in the former is a circular picture illustrating a Latin adage which is engraved around it. The text, in quatrains or couplets, develops the idea with Wither's customary fullness.

<sup>18</sup> A manuscript of the first two cantos, entitled *The History of the Pestilence*, was printed for the first time in 1932 by J. M. French.

<sup>19</sup> John Taylor, the "Water-poet," (see below, n. 25) dealt with the same calamity in *The Fearful Summer* (Oxford, 1625).

<sup>20</sup> The works of Quarles are available in a very annoying edition prepared by A. B. Grosart (3v, 1880). See A. H. Nethercot, "The Literary Legend of Francis Quarles," *MP*, xx (1923), 225-240.

<sup>21</sup> For what is known of Thomas Bancroft (c. 1596-1658), a moral epigrammatist and imitator of Quarles, see Wm. Charvat, "Thomas Bancroft," *PMLA*, xlvii (1932), 753-758.



Quarles's  
Emblems

century,<sup>22</sup> and which from that time to this has gone through something like fifty editions. Each of the five books contains fifteen "emblems" or symbolic pictures, interpreted in verse of various patterns but great piety and simplicity. It has been shown<sup>23</sup> that Quarles owed a great deal stylistically to Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas (1592-1605) and to Phineas Fletcher, and that most of the pictures are redrawings of those which had previously appeared in two Jesuit books of piety. The thing was not new.<sup>24</sup> Jonson's two poems interpreting the pictorial title-pages of Raleigh's *History of the World* (1614) and Coryat's *Crudities* (1611) are excellent examples of the type, but Quarles's gift of quaint, sententious morality made his work a religious classic, particularly among the Puritans whom he detested. Horace Walpole's quip is well known, "Milton was forced to wait till the world had done admiring Quarles"; but in fact the admiration continued into the late nineteenth century.

Quarles's prose style is notably effective and highly epigrammatic. His *Enchyridion* (1640) and *Observations concerning Princes and States, upon Peace and War* (1642) are made up of brief counsels, moral in the first work and political in the second. They are usually less than ten lines long, and have a sprightliness that makes them still agreeable. The later prose works, *Judgment and Mercy for Afflicted Souls* (1646) and *The Profest Royalist* (1645), attack Puritan preciseness and intolerance. One of the weapons Quarles uses best is humor, and few things of the period are more amusing in small compass than the sections of *Judgment and Mercy* headed "The Drunkard's Jubilee" and "The Swearer's Apology."<sup>25</sup>

George  
Herbert

George Herbert's mother was among John Donne's most honored friends, and minor evidences are many that Donne's poems—though the vast majority of them were not yet in print<sup>26</sup>—were familiar to Herbert. Yet George Herbert<sup>27</sup> (1593-1633) is not a follower of Donne; he is not a follower of

<sup>22</sup> F. E. Schelling, "Devotional Poetry," in *Shakespeare and Demi-Science* (Philadelphia, 1927).

<sup>23</sup> G. S. Haight, "The Sources of Quarles's *Emblems*," *Library*, xvi (1936). 188-209; also "The Publication of Quarles' *Emblems*," *ibid.*, xv (1934). 97-109.

<sup>24</sup> Geoffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblems and Other Devices* (Leyden, 1586), and Spenser's *Vision* poems are interesting precursors. On the Continent the vogue of emblem literature goes back to the 1530's. For a pleasant introduction to the subject see E. N. S. Thompson, *Literary Bypaths of the Renaissance* (New Haven, 1924). See also M. Praz, *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery* (1939).

<sup>25</sup> Grosart's ed., i. 73, 75. Another very prolific and entertaining writer in verse and prose is John Taylor (1580-1653), the self-styled "Water-Poet," who after some service in the navy maintained himself as a waterman on the Thames and as a journalistic pamphleteer. His *Works*, "being sixty and three in number," were collected in a folio volume in 1630. They include his *Urania*, a moral poem in 86 *ottava rima* stanzas; *The Sculler* (anti-Romanist and other epigrams, 1612); a great variety of flytings against Thomas Coryat of the *Crudities* (1611); and *Taylor's Motto*, a take-off on Wither's poem of like title and date, with the motto reversed ("Et habeo, et careo, et curo"), 1621. Among the most amusing of Taylor's prose writings are *The Penniless Pilgrimage* (1618), which contains material on Ben Johnson's foot-journey to Scotland in the same year; and *The Praise, Antiquity, and Commodity of Beggary, Beggars, and Begging* (1621).

<sup>26</sup> The earliest collected edition appeared in 1633, the year of Herbert's death.

<sup>27</sup> Herbert belonged to one of the great families of England and Wales. His eldest brother was the Baron Herbert of Cheshire (see above, ch. vii). Another brother, Sir Henry Herbert, was Master of the Revels at court during three reigns. The Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery (the "incomparable brethren" of the Shakespeare Folio) bore the same family name and were

any one. For a proper parallel to his glowing art, infinitely varied in decoration and uniquely personal in theme, one must go back to the art of the Old French troubadours. Herbert was God's troubadour, and devoted himself as proudly and solely to singing his emotions toward the Almighty as did any Provençal singer to the service of his lady. The comparison sounds bizarre, but justifies itself. Herbert's adoration is not in the usual sense holy or humble; it takes small account of the rest of the world, but is intensely individual, addressed to a personal and patrician God, who is capable of appreciating the special sacrifices his high-born servant makes, and of understanding the most exquisite delicacies of technique. The intricacies of Herbert's poems in thought and melody approach those of the Provençal poets. His 169 poems are in something like 140 different stanzaic patterns, of which 116 are employed but once.<sup>28</sup> The pictorial *Easter Wings* and *Altar*, and the poem on Trinity Sunday in three stanzas of three lines each, are gross examples of this poet's facility in devising a special rhythmic form for every emotion. The adjustment is sometimes infinitely delicate, observable only after frequent reading; and with this go a balance and unity of thought-content in which few lyric poets have equaled Herbert.

Yet Herbert's art conceals itself. He abjures sonorousness and affects homeliness of language, and his emotional intensity is so great that his poems often seem simple or even naïve. Note the second stanza of his *Mortification*:

When boys go first to bed,  
They step into their voluntary graves.  
Sleep binds them fast; only their breath  
Makes them not dead.  
Successive nights, like rolling waves,  
Convey them quickly who are bound for death;

and one from *The Holy Communion*:

For sure, when Adam did not know  
To sin, or sin to smother [i.e., conceal],  
He might to heav'n from Paradise go  
As from one room t' another;

or the insurpassable ode on *Virtue*, which begins:

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,  
The bridal of the earth and sky:  
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,  
For thou must die.

third cousins. Our poet, educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge, was for eight years Public Orator of the University, but gave up a career of courtly promise to enter the church in 1630. His poetry was written chiefly during the three years of his rectorship at Bemerton, near Salisbury, and during the period of indecision that preceded his ordination. The edition of G. H. Palmer, *The English Works of George Herbert* (3v, 1905) is of great critical value, but for practical use is superseded by the one-volume *Works of George Herbert*, ed. F. E. Hutchinson (Oxford, 1941). See also R. Freeman, "George Herbert and the Emblem Books," *RES*, xvii (1941), 150-165.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Palmer, *op. cit.*, I, 123-167, "The Style and Technique"; A. McH. Hayes, "Counterpoint in Herbert," *SP*, xxxv (1938), 43-60.

Herbert's poetry is entirely religious. In one of his earliest works he addresses God and asks,

Doth Poetry  
Wear Venus' livery, only serve her turn?  
Why are not sonnets made of Thee, and lays  
Upon Thine altar burnt? Cannot Thy love  
Heighten a spirit to sound out Thy praise  
As well as any she? Cannot Thy dove  
Outstrip their Cupid easily in flight?

He proved that it could. Under the appearance of simplicity which rewards the attainment of the perfect expression, Herbert is the subtlest lyrist of his generation. *The Dawning* is an *aubade* such as the medieval lover sang, but on the theme of Easter morning:

Awake, sad heart, whom sorrow ever drowns!  
Take up thine eyes which feed on earth;  
Unfold thy forehead gather'd into frowns.  
Thy Saviour comes, and with him mirth.  
Awake, awake!  
And with a thankful heart his comforts take.  
But thou dost still lament, and pine, and cry,  
And feel his death, but not his victory.

This poem ends in a famous conceit,

Christ left his grave-clothes that we might, when grief  
Draws tears or blood, not want an handkerchief,

but conceits are not common in Herbert. He can be baroque, as in *The Bag*, which likens Christ's pierced side to a mail-bag for carrying letters to heaven, or *Doomsday*, which is a mad dance of the bones gathering themselves together for the final judgment. He can be as frank toward God as any lover to his lady: blaming himself in *Unkindness*,

I would not use a friend as I use Thee;  
boldly complaining in *Affliction*,

Now I am here, what Thou wilt do with me  
None of my books will show.  
I read, and sigh, and wish I were a tree,  
For sure then I should grow  
To fruit or shade. At least some bird would trust  
Her household to me, and I should be just.  
Yet, though Thou troublest me, I must be meek;

or rising to a proud equality in *Bitter-Sweet*, which is as superb a piece of poetry as was ever compressed into eight short lines,

Ah, my dear angry Lord!  
 Since Thou dost love, yet strike,  
 Cast down, yet help afford:  
 Sure I will do the like.  
 I will complain, yet praise,  
 I will bewail, approve:  
 And all my sour-sweet days  
 I will lament, and love.

Herbert is not often doctrinal, but *The British Church* is one of the loveliest things that has been written since Horace on the *via media*. He is not often broadly ethical, but his *Constancy*, which begins,

Who is the honest man?  
 He that doth still and strongly good pursue,  
 To God, his neighbor, and himself most true.  
 Whom neither force nor fawning can  
 Unpin or wrench from giving all their due,

is as great a poem as Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior*, which it much resembles.<sup>29</sup> He is not frequently mystical or allegorical, but *Love Unknown*, *The Collar*, and *The Pulley* are among the finest short poems of their type. Similar and not inferior is *The Pilgrimage*, which in its thirty-six lines anticipates both Bunyan and Browning's *Childe Roland*. In the last stanza the wanderer, passing through gloom and disillusionment, perceives that

My hill was further. So I flung away,  
 Yet heard a cry  
 Just as I went: *None goes that way*  
*And lives!* If that be all, said I,  
 After so foul a journey death is fair,  
 And but a chair.<sup>30</sup>

"Sweet" and "bright" seem to have been Herbert's favorite adjectives. In many of his poems the qualities these words imply may be overcast by the vehemence and conciseness of his lyric art. One of his latest poems, *The Flower*, from which the first and last two stanzas may be quoted, does them justice:

How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean  
 Are thy returns! Ev'n as the flowers in spring,  
 To which, besides their own demesne,<sup>31</sup>  
 The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring.  
 Grief melts away  
 Like snow in May,  
 As if there were no such cold thing. . . .

<sup>29</sup> Cf. T. T. Stenberg, "Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior* and Herbert's *Constancy*," *MLN*, **xI** (1925), 252-253.

<sup>30</sup> I.e., a sedan-chair for easy travel (one of the earliest uses of the word in this sense).

<sup>31</sup> I.e., the forces which naturally belong to spring.

And now in age I bud again,  
 After so many deaths I live and write;  
 I once more smell the dew and rain,  
 And relish versing. O my only light,  
     It cannot be  
     That I am he  
 On whom Thy tempests fell all night.

These are Thy wonders, Lord of love,  
 To make us see we are but flowers that glide;  
 Which when we once can find and prove,  
 Thou hast a garden for us where to bide.  
     Who would be more,  
     Swelling through store,<sup>32</sup>  
 Forfeit their Paradise by their pride.

Discussion of George Herbert leads inevitably to the quoting of endless excerpts out of an endless variety. Excerpts cannot worthily illustrate a poet whose chief merits include unity and structural balance, and who never used a word too much; but they may suggest the loss those readers suffer who ignore Herbert in the belief that religious poetry is monotonous in theme or thin emotionally. Herbert's English poems were first printed, under the title of *The Temple, Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, in 1633, a few months after his death. The volume was at once popular and reached its fifth edition in 1638.<sup>33</sup> He left also some Latin poems of importance,<sup>34</sup> and, in fine English prose, a manual of the clerical life called *A Priest to the Temple* (first printed in 1652), that gives an admirable picture of the mind in which the poems grew.

Richard  
 Crashaw,  
 Steps to  
 the Temple

Like Herrick, Richard Crashaw<sup>35</sup> (1612-1649) is essentially the poet of one book.<sup>36</sup> *Steps to the Temple, with Other Delights of the Muses* was printed in 1646, two years before the *Hesperides*, and like that volume contains two parts, one secular and one religious. But it is the religious pieces of Crashaw which have priority and chief importance, and the title is an act of homage to Herbert's *Temple*. *The Weeper* (St. Mary Magdalene), *The Tear, Sancta Maria Dolorum*, and other stanzaic poems on religious subjects are as full of conceited language as of pious fervor.<sup>37</sup> *The Name of*

<sup>32</sup> I.e., "proud through prosperity" (Palmer).

<sup>33</sup> Donne's poems, first printed in the same year as Herbert's, reached a third edition only in 1639.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. L. Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae* (1940), pp. 96-97.

<sup>35</sup> The best edition is L. C. Martin, *The Poems, English, Latin, and Greek, of Richard Crashaw* (Oxford, 1927). See R. C. Wallerstein, *Richard Crashaw, a Study in Style and Poetic Development* (Madison, Wis., 1935); the two chapters on Crashaw in H. C. White, *The Metaphysical Poets* (1936), pp. 202-258; and Austin Warren, *Richard Crashaw, a Study in Baroque Sensibility* (Baton Rouge, 1939).

<sup>36</sup> For his Latin epigrams, published in 1634, see L. Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae*, pp. 92-96; and A. Warren, "Crashaw's *Epigrammata Sacra*," *JEGP*, xxxiii (1934), 233-239.

<sup>37</sup> The nineteenth stanza of *The Weeper* likens the eyes of the weeping Magdalene to  
 Two walking baths, two weeping motions,  
 Portable and compendious oceans.

*Jesus* is an unusually fine example of the pseudo-Pindaric ode that Cowley was at this time introducing into the language; and the *Hymn of the Nativity, Sung by the Shepherds*, is quaint and lovely, a remarkable blend of childlike piety and the pastoral convention. The best of the collection are the poems addressed to Saint Teresa, the new Spanish saint (canonized, 1622) by whom Crashaw had been inspired even before he gave up Protestantism. The *Hymn* to her, in notably free tetrameter couplets and language so plain as to be astonishing when compared with that of *The Weeper*, was acknowledged by Coleridge as one of the sources for the second part of *Christabel*. Sometimes its simple vigor reminds one (for thus apparent extremes meet) of the poetry of Bunyan; e.g.,

Since 'tis not to be had at home,  
She 'll travel to a martyrdom.  
No home for her, confesses she,  
But where she may a martyr be.

On the other hand, *The Flaming Heart*, on St. Teresa's book and picture, illustrates in short compass both the verbal ingenuity and the sublimity of which Crashaw was capable. The last section brings together such disparate lines as these:

O sweet incendiary! show here thy art  
Upon this carcass of a hard cold heart. . . .  
O thou undaunted daughter of desires!  
By all thy dower of lights and fires;  
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;  
By all thy lives and deaths of love;  
By thy large draughts of intellectual day  
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they. . . .

Crashaw's more secular poems, sub-titled *The Delights of the Muses*, include a number of translations from the classics and epitaphs on friends deceased (especially William Herries, d. 1631, for whom four laments were written); three graceful elegies inspired by the legend of Saint Alexias; a long panegyric addressed to Queen Henrietta Maria "upon her numerous progeny"; and two poems inspired by his friendship for Cowley, whose contemporary at Cambridge he had been. The outstanding items of the collection, however, are *Music's Duel*, on the well-known theme of the contest between the lute player and the nightingale, in which Crashaw displays both his command of pathos and his proficiency in music; and the *Wishes to His Supposed Mistress*, addressed to one he doubtless never knew,

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On the other hand, the ninth stanza has an exquisite reminiscence of Othello's last speech,

There is no need at all  
That the balsam-sweating bough  
So coyly should let fall  
His med'cinable tears.



Whoe'er she be,  
That not impossible she,  
That shall command my heart and me,

to whom he wishes, among many other noble things,

Life that dares send  
A challenge to his end,  
And when it comes say, Welcome, friend!

Crashaw, though in some of his poems diffuse and over-ridden with conceits, was as pure a poet as his age can show. Less ingenious than Cowley, he had a richer and deeper nature and by honest faith traversed the whole range of Christian belief. Born the son of a Puritan divine, he was expelled (like Cowley) from Cambridge as an Anglican, and ended his life a convert to Rome. Cowley's tribute to him is one of the sincerest things that Cowley wrote:

Poet and Saint! to thee alone are given  
The two most sacred names of earth and heaven. . . .  
And I myself a Catholic will be,  
So far at least, great saint, to pray to thee.

Henry  
Vaughan

Henry Vaughan<sup>38</sup> (c. 1622-1695), the Silurist (i.e., South Welshman), as he describes himself on the title-pages of his works, came of an important family, and was probably educated at Jesus College, Oxford, as his twin brother Thomas was. Little is known of his life except that he saw some service on the king's side in the civil wars,<sup>39</sup> became a country doctor, dwelling "in retirement" at his native place of Newton, Brecknockshire, on the Usk River, married twice, and was buried at the age of seventy-three. His fame was small in his own day, and he was not discovered by posterity (to whom in a Latin poem he had appealed) until 1847.<sup>40</sup>

Vaughan's secular verse, represented by a small volume of *Poems* in 1646 and another called *Olor Iscanus* (The Swan of Usk) in 1651, is not of great distinction.<sup>41</sup> It consists of translations from the Latin (with a few original Latin poems), love verses, occasional verses to friends, elegies, and an agreeable laudation of his native river, the Usk. It was the discovery of George Herbert's *Temple* that turned Vaughan's thoughts to religion and made him a poet of importance. The preface which he wrote in 1654 for the second edition of his *Silex Scintillans* (Fire from the Flint) is a strong protest against frivolous verse. "The first," he says, "that with any effectual success

<sup>38</sup> The best edition is *The Works of Henry Vaughan*, ed. L. C. Martin (2v, Oxford, 1914). The edition by E. K. Chambers, with introduction by H. C. Beeching (1896), is still useful. See also E. Blunden, *On the Poems of Henry Vaughan* (1927); two excellent chapters on Vaughan in H. C. White, *The Metaphysical Poets* (1936); and the earlier essay of L. I. Guiney in *A Little English Gallery* (1894), pp. 53-118.

<sup>39</sup> See E. L. Marilla, "Henry Vaughan and the Civil War," *JEGP*, xli (1942). 514-526.

<sup>40</sup> The first modern edition of his poetry appeared in that year, but it is known that Wordsworth possessed and used an early copy of *Silex Scintillans*. See M. Y. Hughes, "The Theme of Pre-existence and Infancy in *The Retreat*," *PQ*, xx (1941). 484-500.

<sup>41</sup> See H. R. Walley, "The Strange Case of *Olor Iscanus*," *RES*, xviii (1942). 27-37.

attempted a diversion of this foul and overflowing stream, was the blessed man, Mr. George Herbert, whose holy life and verse gained many pious converts, of whom I am the least." The indebtedness of Vaughan to his fellow-Welshman is continually evident in *Silex Scintillans*,<sup>42</sup> and the younger poet often so recaptured Herbert's tone and attitude that if the poems were removed from their respective volumes, it would in many cases be a most delicate task to reassign them. There are now critics who regard Vaughan as the greater poet. Where he and Herbert are strongly distinguishable, it is by a certain romantic heightening in the later writer: he has more mysticism, a somewhat warmer feeling for nature,<sup>43</sup> and a looser logical structure. It is the difference one sees in architecture between the primitive Gothic and the Decorated styles. The three best poems by Vaughan are three that parallel Herbert least closely: *The Retreat*, *The World*, and "They are all gone into the world of light." Here the Celtic magic in his nature transcends all else, and he leads us into a realm that is almost wholly intuitive. On these three poems, and two or three others<sup>44</sup> that resemble them, Vaughan's fame mainly and securely rests.

Thomas Traherne<sup>45</sup> (c. 1636-1674) had the soul of a poet, but not the art. To say this is to imply that he has been sometimes overrated; nor is that surprising. The romantic story of the discovery and publication of a manuscript of his previously unknown poems as late as 1903, and of another, partly different, manuscript collection in 1910, gave him the conspicuousness of a new comet; and beyond this, the mere existence of a poet of his peculiar quality in the reign of Charles II is a piquant paradox. Like Herbert and Vaughan he was of Welsh origin. The known facts of his life are that he was born in or near Hereford and educated at Oxford, where he entered Brasenose College in 1653 and between 1656 and 1669 took three degrees; that he became a clergyman, was appointed chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgman, Keeper of the Seals in the Restoration (1667-1672), and died in October, 1674, before he had attained the age of forty. He has been compared with Walt Whitman, and though there is no similarity in subject matter or in bulk of personality, there is some resemblance to the American poet in Traherne's intense self-consciousness, his passion for exclamatory apostrophes and long lists of vaguely related objects, and his formlessness.

To speak of Traherne's philosophy in relation to his poems is rather a misuse of the term. Few poets have been less philosophic, except on the Wordsworthian assumption that the best philosopher is a child; just as few poems are more unthinking than the four to which Traherne gave the

Thomas  
Traherne

<sup>42</sup> The subtitle of *Silex Scintillans*, "Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations," is also the subtitle of *The Temple*.

<sup>43</sup> See A. C. Judson, "Henry Vaughan as a Nature Poet," *PMLA*, XLII (1927), 146-156.

<sup>44</sup> E.g., *Religion* (Martin, p. 404); "And do they so? have they a sense?" (Martin, p. 432).

<sup>45</sup> The best edition of his poems is *The Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne*, ed. G. I. Wade, (1932). See also his *Centuries of Meditations* ed. B. Dobell (1908); the chapter on Traherne in H. C. White, *The Metaphysical Poets* (1936), pp. 315-374; E. N. S. Thompson, "The Philosophy of Thomas Traherne," *PQ*, VIII (1929), 97-112.

title, *Thoughts*. His attractiveness lies largely in the fact that he retained into adult years a child's-eye view of the world and of God, as in *The Vision*:

To see His endless treasures  
Made all my own, myself the end  
Of all His labors! 'Tis the life of pleasures,  
To see myself His friend!

His best poems—and they are very charming—are those which, like *Poverty*, *Wonder*, *The World*, and *Innocence*, most simply express the mind of a child; but he had a very narrow range, little sense of euphony, and a rather prosaic vocabulary. The lovely rhythms and subtle thought of Herbert and Vaughan are sadly flattened in many of his efforts. An extreme example of what could happen to this kind of verse is the stanza in which his surviving brother Philip dedicated the manuscript called *Poems of Felicity*:

To God, my sov'reign Lord,  
My heart and hand accord  
These holy first-fruits of a pious mind  
To dedicate.  
At any rate  
I can't be so injurious or unkind  
To the memory of my brother  
As to devote to any other  
These sacred relics he hath left behind;

but Thomas, the poet, could too often approach this nadir, as in the first stanza of *Love*. Much of his verse is, in spite of the rime, only measured prose, and Traherne is probably at his best in the professedly prose sketches of a child's mentality which are found in his *Centuries of Meditations*.

# XI

## Seventeenth-Century Poetry: III. The Academic and Courtly Tradition

Secular poetry during the reigns of James I and Charles I lay in the shadow of Spenser, Jonson, and Donne; but the lyric undergrowth was very dense. Two bishops, who passed (with a ten-year interval between them) through Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford, and so into the higher order of clergy, illustrate pleasantly the upper-class taste of the day. Richard Corbett<sup>1</sup> (1582-1635), successively Bishop of Oxford and of Norwich, had a humorous bent best carried out in his longest poem, *Iter Boreale*, which describes the journey of "four clerks of Oxford" to the north of England in a certain month of August (c. 1620). Henry King<sup>2</sup> (1592-1669), Bishop of Chichester, the close friend both of Jonson and of Donne, owed most discipleship to the former. He wrote on some of the same occasions as Corbett, but had a larger range and a better singing voice. His elegy on the execution of Sir Walter Raleigh in 1618 is a fine example of controlled indignation:

Corbett,  
King, and  
Other  
Minor  
Lyrists

I will not weep, for 'twere as great a sin  
To shed a tear for thee, as to have been  
An actor in thy death . . . ;

<sup>1</sup> Corbett's poems were published posthumously in 1647, and again in 1807 (4th ed.); see J. E. V. Crofts, "A Life of Bishop Corbett," in *E&S*, x (1924). 61-96. Corbett has been conjecturally identified with the "R. C." whose initials are affixed to the fine series of riming satires called *The Time's Whistle* and other poems, composed about 1615, but first printed by J. M. Cowper (1871; *EETS*, 48). They would considerably enlarge his fame.

<sup>2</sup> See *Poems, Elegies, Paradoxes, and Sonnets* (1657), reprinted by G. Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, III (Oxford, 1921). 161-273, and by J. Sparrow (1925). Consult L. Mason, "The Life and Works of Henry King, D.D." *Trans. Conn. Acad.*, XVIII (1913). 225-289. With Corbett and King may be mentioned the Leicestershire clergyman, Thomas Pestell (1585-1667), whose long life overlapped theirs and whose subjects are often similar (see Hannah Buchan, *The Poems of Thomas Pestell*, Oxford, 1940); and a more important poet, Sir John Beaumont (1583-1627), the dramatist's older brother, who wrote copiously in both secular and religious strains (see A. B. Grosart, *The Poems of Sir John Beaumont, Bart.*, 1869). Beaumont's first published poem, *The Metamorphosis of Tobacco* (1602), is a long encomium of the weed, embellished with mythology, geography, and dubious medicine, and antithetical at all points to James I's famous *Counterblast* of two years later. Equally discursive and ill-constructed is Beaumont's long political poem, *Bosworth Field*, dealing with the events of a single day. The last may be grouped with the still more conventional poetical narratives of Charles Aleyn (or Allen): *The Battles of Crescey and Poitiers* (1631) and *The History of Henry VII . . . with That Famed Battle . . . upon Redmoore near Bosworth* (1638). For Beaumont's still longer moral poem, *The Crown of Thorns*, see B. H. Newdigate, "Sir John Beaumont's 'The Crowne of Thorns,'" *RES*, XVIII (1942). 284-290. Beaumont and Aleyn were both confessed disciples of Drayton. The former wrote mainly in the heroic couplet, which he employed with ease and sometimes with striking skill. His verses, "To his Late Majesty concerning the True Form of English Poetry," anticipate the ideas and technique of Pope's *Essay on Criticism*. His entertainment, *The Theatre of Apollo* (1625), is edited by W. W. Greg (1926).

and nothing could be more gracefully phrased than this couplet from his epitaph on the Earl of Dorset:

One high in fair opinion, rich in praise,  
And full of all we could have wish'd, but days.

A later group comprises Thomas Stanley (1625-1678); William Hammond (1614-1680), Stanley's uncle; John Hall (1627-1656), Stanley's protégé;<sup>3</sup> and Sir Edward Sherburne (1618-1702), his lifelong friend. They represent a wide variety of poetic virtuosity, and Stanley, like Sherburne, shows an interesting study of Continental writers.<sup>4</sup> Stanley is doubtless the finest lyricist of the group, but Hall also has much charm.

Minor Nar-  
rative Poets

The absence of notable prose fiction in this period is slightly compensated, and perhaps also explained, by a considerable number of long romances in verse: Nathaniel Whiting's *Pleasant History of Albino and Bellama* (1638), Sir Francis Kynaston's *Leoline and Sydanis* (1642), William Bosworth's *Chaste and Lost Lovers, or Arcadius and Sepha* (1651), Edward Benlowes' *Theophila, or Love's Sacrifice* (1652), William Chamberlayne's *Pharonnida* (1659), and John Chalkhill's incomplete *Thealma and Clearchus*, which Izaak Walton first published in 1683.<sup>5</sup> Whiting exhibits Italian influence, and Kynaston (who had translated the first two books of *Troilus and Criseyde* into remarkably ingenious Latin rime royal, 1635) shows traces of Chaucer. Of Bosworth his posthumous editor says: "The strength of his fancy and the shadowing of it in words he taketh from Mr. Marlow in his *Hero and Leander*."<sup>6</sup> The raciest of these writers is Whiting; the most religious Benlowes, who employs a bizarre three-line stanza, and has not enough story to make even a passable allegory. The most poetic of them is Chamberlayne, who is also, unfortunately, the most obscure.<sup>7</sup> There are strikingly good passages in nearly all these elongated works; but any of them, if read in full, will show how curiously the pattern of straightforward narrative has been corroded by pseudo-Spenserian complication and wilful absurdity. The longest, perhaps the most desultory and wilful, and yet the most interesting of all these long narratives is *The New Metamorphosis* by "J. M." (perhaps Gervase Markham), preserved only in manuscript in the British Museum.<sup>8</sup> It is in twenty-four books of heroic couplet verse, which took the author about fifteen years to compose (1600-1615). It is a mine of

<sup>3</sup> Stanley, Hammond, and Hall are all reprinted by Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, II. 177-225, 483-520, III. 95-189. See also *Thomas Stanley, His Original Lyrics Complete*, ed. L. I. Guiney (Hull, 1907).

<sup>4</sup> See Mario Praz, "Stanley, Sherburne, and Ayres as Translators and Imitators of Italian, Spanish, and French Poets," *MLR*, xx (1925). 280-294.

<sup>5</sup> All these are reprinted by Saintsbury, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Kynaston's *Cynthiades*, appended to *Leoline and Sydanis*, contains some excellent love songs. Bosworth's long amatory lament, *Hinc Lachrimae*, has only the merit of fluency. The *Poems Divine and Humane* (1641) of Thomas Beedome are of better quality and contain some pretty lines (selection, with introduction by F. Meynell, Nonesuch Press, 1928).

<sup>7</sup> Chamberlayne was also the author of *Love's Victory*, a melodramatic tragicomedy of small worth, which was never acted, but was printed in 1658 (ed. C. K. Meschter, Bethlehem, Pa., 1914).

<sup>8</sup> See J. H. H. Lyon, *A Study of The Newe Metamorphosis* (1919).

contemporary reference and a wilderness of fantastic plot. To conclude with another early example, *Dolarny's Primrose* by John Raynolds<sup>9</sup> (1606), described as "the first part of the passionate hermit," is more moral and much shorter, but hardly less arbitrary in its narrative method. A striking plagiarism from *Hamlet* gets it occasional mention.

Drummond, "unlike most poets," as one of his nineteenth-century biographers remarks, "appears to have left considerable property."<sup>10</sup> Coming of age soon after the union of Scotland and England in 1603 and succeeding his father (who had been gentleman usher to King James) in the possession of the landed estate of Hawthornden, seven miles from Edinburgh, in 1610, William Drummond (1585-1649) was privileged to devote over forty years to learned and literary leisure, broken only by periods of residence on the continent and to some extent at the end by the troubles of civil war. He was Master of Arts of Edinburgh University and the master of many tongues, and was one of the earliest Scots to employ the London literary dialect exclusively in his writings. His life contains few incidents of note except the sudden death of his fiancée, Mary Cunningham. This, and the influence of the Continental sonneteers, engendered a gentle melancholy. Some twenty years later (1632) he married a lady described (perhaps untruly) as "the daughter of a minister by one whose sire was a shepherd" and had by her five sons and four daughters.

William  
Drummond  
of Hawthornden

Drummond has a secure place in the history of the English sonnet between Shakespeare and Milton. He did not, like the latter poet, write too few; about a hundred and fifty have been preserved, many mournfully amatory, many religious, and a considerable number complimentary of persons and occasions. He owes much to Sidney and to sixteenth-century French and Italian sonneteers, but his general idea seems to have been to write like Petrarch, whom he followed in the practice of interspersing *canzoni*<sup>11</sup> (and also madrigals) among his sonnets. The latter show obvious facility, but the ideas are usually trite, being very frequently borrowed from Italian and French originals;<sup>12</sup> and Drummond found it difficult to adhere for long to any single type of rime sequence. Most of his sonnets are strictly neither Petrarchan nor Shakespearean. As good as any perhaps, and very pleasing, are the one *For the Baptist*,

Drummond's  
Sonnets

The last and greatest herald of heaven's king,  
and the one (imitated from Cardinal Bembo) in praise of rustic solitude,

Dear wood, and you, sweet solitary place,  
Where from the vulgar I estranged live.

<sup>9</sup> Ed. A. B. Grosart (1880).

<sup>10</sup> Drummond's *Poetical Works*, ed. W. B. Turnbull (1890 ed.), p. viii.

<sup>11</sup> Called by him "Songs." They have been regarded as anticipating the pseudo-Pindaric odes introduced by Cowley.

<sup>12</sup> See for a full discussion the introduction to the best edition of Drummond: L. E. Kastner, *The Poetical Works of Wm. Drummond of Hawthornden, with "A Cypress Grove"* (2v, Manchester, 1913); also A. Joly, *William Drummond de Hawthornden, aperçu d'ensemble sur la vie et l'œuvre du poète* (Lille, 1934), ch. II; R. C. Wallerstein, "The Style of Drummond of Hawthornden," *PMLA*, XLVIII (1933). 1090-1107.



Forth  
Feasting

*The Conversations with Jonson*

*Drummond's Prose Style*

Drummond's earliest published poem was an offering on the much lamented death of Prince Henry, *Tears on the Death of Meliades* (1613), in about a hundred riming couplets and a concluding sonnet. This was followed in 1616 by a larger volume, *Poems: Amorous, Funeral, Divine, Pastoral, in Sonnets, Songs, Sextains, Madrigals*; <sup>13</sup> and in 1623 by another collection, *Flowers of Sion, or Spiritual Poems*. As the laird of Hawthornden, Drummond was an acknowledged leader in the literary life of Edinburgh, and on the return of King James to that city in 1617, he wrote the panegyric, *Forth Feasting*, in which the Firth of Forth addresses the monarch at length on the subject of the latter's royal virtues and wisdom. The technical precision of these verses, and almost exclusive use of the "closed" couplet, have caused them to be remarked as among the prototypes of Pope's metre. As is Drummond's way, the poem ranges over large tracts of mythology, history, and geography, and he finds occasion to pause over the recent transplantation of the royal prestige to the new world in the naming of Jamestown and the James River. *Forth Feasting* is a colorful, though necessarily fulsome, poem, superior to the highly mythological tributes that Drummond devised for the next king, Charles I, when he came to Edinburgh in 1633. Both these royal visits are overshadowed by the visit of Ben Jonson in 1618. At the end of his famous pedestrian progress from London to Edinburgh Ben spent a couple of weeks at Hawthornden as guest of Drummond, who, though not moved to poetry on the occasion, did a better thing in recording the literary opinions and a large number of personal anecdotes of the stranger. <sup>14</sup> Rough and often tantalizingly incomplete, Drummond's jottings yet give us our clearest and most unbiassed view of Jonson's rugged, rational, ultra-English personality.

Drummond produced one piece of fine prose, as different as possible from the crabbed terseness of his summaries of Jonson's talk. *The Cypress Grove*, published with the *Flowers of Sion* in 1623, is a rather Platonic discourse of about fifty pages on death, the soul, and the future life, suggestive, but in a quieter key, of Browne's *Religio Medici* and *Urn Burial*. It has a mannered style, rich in figure and in unacknowledged quotation from earlier philosophers, <sup>15</sup> but there is not much excess; the reasoning (considering the subject) is shrewd, and the balance of the sentences is excellent, as in this typical one:

Applause whilst thou livest serveth but to make thee that fair mark against which envy and malice direct their arrows, and when thou art wounded, all eyes are turned towards thee (like the sun, which is most gazed on in an eclipse), not for pity or praise, but detraction.

<sup>13</sup> There is an earlier, less complete edition, without date, assigned by Kastner to c. 1614.

<sup>14</sup> These Conversations have been edited separately by R. F. Patterson (1923), and in Vol. I of the Oxford Jonson (1925). The attack on the authenticity of the manuscript by C. L. Stainer in *Jonson and Drummond: Their Conversations* (Oxford, 1925) is not effective.

<sup>15</sup> Including Bacon, Montaigne, and Donne. Cf. G. S. Greene, "Drummond's Borrowing from Donne," *PQ*, xi (1932). 26-38; M. A. Rugoff, "Drummond's Debt to Donne," *PQ*, xvi (1937). 85-88.

It might be asserted that Drummond's prose style is better than his poetic, at least in his sonnets. The latter are too full of exclamation; e.g.,

O woful life! Life? No, but living death,  
Frail boat of crystal in a rocky sea,

and often carry inversion to such a point that one may doubt whether the southern English he employs was perfectly idiomatic to him. Yet a passage from the late *Entertainment of King Charles* (1633) will show again how very good his couplets (and how bad his political judgment) could be:

A Prince all gracious, affable, divine,  
Meek, wise, just, valiant, whose radiant shine  
Of virtues (like the stars about the pole  
Gilding the night) enlight'neth every soul  
Your scepter sways; a Prince born in this age,  
To guard the innocents from tyrants' rage,  
To make peace prosper, justice to reflower  
In desert hamlet as in lordly bower;  
A Prince that, though of none he stand in awe,  
Yet first subjects himself to his own law;  
Who joys in good, and still, as right directs,  
His greatness measures by his good effects;  
His people's pedestal, who rising high  
To grace his throne, makes Scotland's name to fly  
On halcyon's wings (her glory which restores)  
Beyond the ocean to Columbus' shores [i.e., to Nova Scotia].<sup>16</sup>

Most of the poets treated in this chapter, if not all, could be properly assigned to the "Tribe of Ben" as drawing from Jonson their chief guidance in poetry; and the same is true of Beaumont, Fletcher, Richard Brome, and numerous others.<sup>17</sup> There was, of course, no ritual by which one became a "Son," though Jonson and others sometimes wrote jestingly as if there were. In so centrifugal a time, moreover, even those who bore the same banner were often found moving in different directions, and it may be sufficient to illustrate the pervasive influence of Ben by two examples from the two universities.

*The Tribe  
of Ben*

The Cambridge wit and dramatist, Thomas Randolph<sup>18</sup> (1605-1635), who

<sup>16</sup> Kastner, II, 120. "In 1621 Sir Wm. Alexander obtained a grant of the whole peninsula and it was named in the patent Nova Scotia instead of Acadia" (*Ency. Brit.*). Alexander (c. 1567-1640; see above, Part II, ch. VII), the friend of Drummond, was himself author of a sequence of sonnets and other poems, entitled *Aurora* (1604), and various later works. For specimens of these and of the poems of Sir Robert Aytoun (1570-1638) see G. Eyre-Todd, *Scottish Poetry of the Seventeenth Century* (Glasgow, 1895). Another Scottish poet, contemporary with Drummond, deserves brief mention: Patrick Hannay of Sorby in Galloway. Little is known of his life; but he wrote some acceptable elegies, sonnets, and songs, and two long narratives in stanzaic verse, *Philomela* and *Sheretina and Mariana* (reprinted by Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, I (1905), 615-726).

<sup>17</sup> See K. A. McEuen, *Classical Influence upon the Tribe of Ben* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1940).

<sup>18</sup> Convenient editions are J. J. Parry, *The Poems and Amyntas of Thomas Randolph*, (1917), and G. Thorn-Drury, *The Poems of Thomas Randolph* (1929). See also C. L. Day, "New Poems by Randolph," *RES*, VIII (1932), 29-36, and G. C. Moore Smith, *Thomas Randolph* (Warton Lecture on English Poetry, 1927).

Thomas  
Randolph

like Marlowe died before he reached the age of thirty, was one of the cleverest of Jonson's disciples. Pleasant anecdotes are recorded of their relationship, and one of Randolph's best poems is his *Gratulatory to Mr. Ben Jonson for His Adopting Him to Be His Son*, which begins,

I was not born to Helicon, nor dare  
Presume to think myself a Muse's heir.  
I have no title to Parnassus hill,  
Nor any acre of it by the will  
Of a dead ancestor, nor could I be  
Aught but a tenant unto Poetry.  
But thy adoption quits me of all fear,  
And makes me challenge a child's portion there.  
I am akin to heroes, being thine,  
And part of my alliance is divine.

He wrote also a loyal reply to Jonson's ode, "Come, leave the loathed stage," and a long *Eclogue to Mr. Johnson*, in which, in the person of the young shepherd Damon, he discusses with his master Tityrus (Jonson) the disillusionments of a poet's life.<sup>19</sup>

Randolph wrote few songs, but had a facile hand for the elegies, epithalamia, and translations of classic gems in which the age delighted. He especially affected the pastoral, sometimes for the sake of voluptuous detail, as in *A Pastoral Courtship*, and sometimes as a means of satire, as in the clever *Eclogue Occasioned by Two Doctors Disputing upon Predestination*. There is a forecast of Burns in the naughty wit of this parody, which begins with Tityrus challenging Alexis to explain the difference between his twin lambs,

Th' one black as jet, the other white as snow:  
Say, in just providence how could it be so?

Randolph's five plays were in some demand in the seventeenth century, as the list of editions shows.<sup>20</sup> The first, *Aristippus, or the Jovial Philosopher* (1630), was a Cambridge entertainment; the last, *Amyntas, or the Impossible Dowry*, a full-dress pastoral in five acts, performed before the King and Queen at Whitehall. The author's wit and ingenuity are more apparent in them than any dramatic power.

The poet-dramatist-preacher, William Cartwright<sup>21</sup> (1611-1643), of whom Jonson said, "My son Cartwright writes all like a man," has not impressed

<sup>19</sup> The jocular poem on the loss of Randolph's finger, written by William Hemming, contains many interesting references to contemporary poets; see J. J. Parry, "A 17th Century Gallery of Poets," *JEGP*, xix (1920). 1-8.

<sup>20</sup> See G. C. Moore Smith, "The Canon of Randolph's Dramatic Works," *RES*, i (1925). 309-323. *The Drinking Academy*, first printed in 1930 (ed. S. A. Tannenbaum and H. E. Rollins), has been recently added to Randolph's plays. See G. C. Moore Smith's attempt to ascribe it to Robert Baron, *RES*, vi (1930). 476-483, and Professor Rollins' reply in *PMLA*, xlvi (1931). 786-801.

<sup>21</sup> See R. C. Goffin, *The Life and Poems of William Cartwright* (Cambridge, 1918); and for bibliography, G. B. Evans, "Comedies, Tragi-Comedies, with Other Poems. By Mr. William Cartwright (1651): a Bibliographical Study," *Library* xxiii (1942). 12-22; and J. P. Danton, "William Cartwright and his Comedies . . . 1651," *Library Quar.*, xii (1942). 438-456.

posterity as a virile force, but he bewitched his contemporaries by his charm and promise. The latter half of his short life was spent at Oxford, and when he died of fever in the second year of the civil war, King Charles, whose court was then in the city, wore personal mourning for him. Like Randolph, he wrote several plays, as well as a rather thin offering of occasional verse. The poetical form that he uses most is the Jonsonian verse letter or meditation in couplets. He is too often concerned with royal deaths and weddings or compliments to Oxford dignitaries; but he reaches a high level in his elegy on Sir Bevil Greville, the cavalier hero, and in the poem on Jonson himself, which he contributed to *Jonsonus Virbius* in 1638, and which contains the source of Denham's most famous distich in *Cooper's Hill*. Cartwright can occasionally write a warm and unclerical love lyric; and in one delightful poem, *Corinna's Tomb*, which is suggestive of William Collins, he strikes a note of fantasy concerning external nature that was not usual in his time.<sup>22</sup>

William  
Cartwright

Thomas Carew's poems are better known than his life, which seems to have begun about 1595 and to have ended obscurely before the outbreak of the civil wars in 1642. He had the favor of Charles I, whose "sewer in ordinary" he was, and in coöperation with Inigo Jones he wrote an amusing masque, *Coelum Britannicum*, for presentation at Whitehall in 1634, the year of *Comus*.<sup>23</sup> Henry Lawes wrote music for both masques. Carew's friends were mainly members of the "Cavalier School" of poets (e.g., Lovelace, Suckling, Davenant) and of the court party, and his reputation was not high even in those indulgent circles. But he appears to have given his poems a care that he did not bestow upon his conduct. The light lyrics beginning, "He that loves a rosy cheek," "Ask me no more where Jove bestows," and "Come, Celia, fix thine eyes on mine," are exceptionally well executed, though they tell us little of Carew as a lover.

Thomas  
Carew

Like other dissolute poets, he is prolific of good advice to young girls; and, at the other extreme, he develops with a good deal of art the physical paganism of some of the Elizabethans.<sup>24</sup> His range is pleasantly extended in two charming and detailed poems on country hospitality, *To Saxham*, and *To my Friend G. N. from Wrest*; and he shows more than respectable critical powers in his well reasoned poems to Aurelian Townsend and Ben Jonson. Of the same thoughtful quality is his fine *Elegy on the Death of Dr. Donne*, of whom he says,

Here lies a king that ruled as he thought fit  
The universal monarchy of wit.

<sup>22</sup> One of the noblest and most notable of Jonson's "sons," Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland (1610-1643), is relatively unimportant as a poet (see the edition of A. B. Grosart, 1871); but his long *Eclogue on the Death of Ben Jonson*, in which he pays tribute to the "ethic lectures of his comedies" and to Jonson's character, is a fine piece.

<sup>23</sup> Carew's masque was printed in the year of its presentation, 1634. His poems appeared in 1640 and again in 1642. There is no recent edition, but the following are still serviceable: J. W. Ebsworth, *The Poems and Masque of Thomas Carew* (1893); Arthur Vincent, *Poems of Thomas Carew* (1899).

<sup>24</sup> E.g., in *A Rapture*, *The Second Rapture*, *The Compliment*.

The giants, Jonson and Donne, were revered by Carew. One was the man "greater than all men else," the other the poet "worth all that went before." He borrowed from them to the extent in which a poet of his powers could: from Jonson the great lesson of classic polish, and from Donne a sense of the exciting power of a figure. The result is sometimes rather fine; e.g.,

I am the dial's hand, still walking round,  
You are the compass; and I never sound  
Beyond your circle, neither can I show  
Aught but what first expressed is in you.  
(*To Celia, upon Love's Ubiquity*)

Strew all the pavements where he treads  
With loyal hearts or rebels' heads;  
But, Bifront,<sup>25</sup> open thou no more  
In his blest reign the temple door.  
(*A New Year's Gift to the King*)

Sometimes it was quite absurd:

So, though a virgin, yet a bride  
To every grace, she justified  
A chaste polygamy, and died.  
(*Maria Wentworth*)

*Sir John  
Suckling*

Though the most short-lived, Sir John Suckling<sup>26</sup> (1609-1642) is probably the most typical of the group of court poets, including Carew, Lovelace, Denham, Davenant, and Waller, who flourished in the reign of Charles I. The son of a wealthy state official, he was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, traveled abroad, saw some military service in Germany under Gustavus Adolphus, and returned in 1632 to become, in the words of his friend Davenant, "famous at court for his accomplishments and ready, sparkling wit." He became notorious also for gambling and dissipation.<sup>27</sup> In 1639 he took part in the King's inglorious expedition against the Scots, and two years later, while sitting as a member in the Long Parliament, entered into a conspiracy with other royalists to secure the Earl of Strafford's escape from the Tower. When this plot, similar to the one in which Waller was implicated a couple of years later, was discovered, Suckling fled to France and put an end to his life, it was said, by poison.

Of all the "Cavalier" group Suckling had the most interesting mind and the largest potentialities for poetry. He had a sense of humor, as is shown in the overrated *Session of the Poets* and the truly delightful *Ballad of a Wedding*, and a somewhat Byronic gift of social criticism; and he was able to write cogently in prose; e.g., in his political letter to Henry Jermyn (1641).

<sup>25</sup> I.e., Janus, whose temple doors were opened in time of war, closed in peace.

<sup>26</sup> The best edition is A. H. Thompson, *The Works of Sir John Suckling in Prose and Verse* (1910).

<sup>27</sup> See F. O. Henderson, "Traditions of Précieux and Libertin in Suckling's Poetry," *ELH*, IV (1937). 274-298.

But his potentialities were mainly unrealized. His four plays—*Aglaura*, *The Goblins*, *Brennoralt*, and *The Sad One*—are arid and ill-constructed, too full of melodramatic contrivances and undeveloped characters, and are written in the loosest of blank verse. Their only interest today is in the wealth of literary allusion they contain to Shakespeare and other earlier poets.

Much of Suckling's lyric verse is unpolished; he appears to have prided himself upon his quickness of composition, and he did not feel deeply the passions of love and loyalty. His best verses are the lightest:

Out upon it, I have loved  
Three whole days together,  
And am like to love three more,  
If it prove fair weather;

or the famous song from *Aglaura*,

Why so pale and wan, fond lover,  
Prithee, why so pale?

Yet, though there was little faith in him and little warmth, Suckling usually has something to say, and he can sometimes phrase a fine romantic line, such as

Heaven were not heaven if we knew what it were.<sup>28</sup>

Though he called Donne the "great lord" of "pure wit,"<sup>29</sup> Suckling rarely attempts conceits, and he is also notably free from mythological adornment. There is hardly a purer English style in the seventeenth century than Suckling's, and there are few better personal letters of the period than the forty or fifty of his that have been preserved.

Five years younger than Milton and as much older than Cowley, John Cleveland<sup>30</sup> (1613-1658) was educated at Milton's college (Christ's, Cambridge), and on being elected to a fellowship at St. John's in 1634 acquired considerable repute about the university as a wit and poet. He contributed verses in 1638 both to the memorial for Edward King in which *Lycidas* appeared and to the volume in memory of Ben Jonson, *Jonsonus Virbius*. After the outbreak of civil war in 1642 he followed the royalist court to Oxford and served the king both in the field and by satire in prose and verse. His writing is rough and makes little appeal to the reader today, though at the time it had great vogue. *The Rebel Scot* (1644) was his best known piece and can be illustrated by four lines:

Had Cain been Scot, God would have changed his doom;  
Not forced him wander, but confined him home.  
Like Jews they spread and as infection fly,  
As if the Devil had ubiquity!

<sup>28</sup> *Against Fruition*.

<sup>29</sup> *To My Friend Will Davenant, on His Other Poems*.

<sup>30</sup> *The Poems of John Cleveland*, ed. John M. Berdan (1903); G. Saintsbury, *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*, III (1921). 1-94. See S. V. Gapp, "Notes on John Cleveland," *PMLA*, XLVI (1931). 1075-1086.



Only once, in *The General Eclipse*, written after the ruinous defeat at Naseby (1645) and the flight of King and Queen, does something of the pathos and poetry of the lost cause enter his verse:

Ladies that gild the glittering noon  
And by reflection mend his ray,  
Whose beauty makes the sprightly sun  
To dance as upon Easter-day,  
What are you now the Queen's away? . . .

As an obstructed fountain's head  
Cuts the entail off from the streams  
And brooks are disinherited,  
Honor and beauty are but dreams  
Since Charles and Mary lost their beams!

The figure in the last stanza exemplifies the imagery by which Cleveland's earlier love poetry also is rather marred than adorned. He is as fond as Cowley of "conceits," and uses them less intelligently. In *To Julia to Expedite Her Promise* he admonishes the lady by a parallel with the two calendars,

Your sex lives faster than the males,  
As if, to measure age's span,  
The sober Julian were the account of man  
Whilst you live by the fleet Gregorian.

As the difference amounts to something like three days in four centuries, the terms *sober* and *fleet* are not really impressive.

Richard  
Lovelace

Richard Lovelace (1618-c. 1657) is remembered for his beautiful Cavalier face and name, his military virtues, and for two stirring songs which rise high above the level of his chaste and copious, but not otherwise remarkable verse.<sup>31</sup> Twice—in writing to Lucasta on going to the wars ("Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind"), and to Althaea from prison ("When love with unconfined wings")—the circumstances of his chivalrous life provided him with a perfect poetic opportunity. Lovelace's other songs, though highly praised by his friends and set to music by some of the most eminent composers of his day, lack real vigor; and his many poems in pentameter couplet lack compactness of thought and variety of rhythm. His pastoral, *Amarantha*, is obscure and over-long, and his efforts at humor are not very merry. Lovelace is no nature poet, but a variety is lent to his repertory by his poems on the grasshopper, the fly, the ant, the snail, the falcon, and the toad and spider, which suggest that in a quieter time his talents might have deepened. The prettiest of all his lesser works is the "sonnet" on Elinda's glove,

Thou Snowy farm with thy five tenements. . . .

<sup>31</sup> The poems of Lovelace appeared first in two small volumes: *Lucasta* (1649) and *Lucasta, Posthumous Poems* (1659). See *The Poems of Richard Lovelace*, ed. C. H. Wilkinson (Oxford, 1930); C. H. Hartmann, *The Cavalier Spirit and Its Influence on the Life and Work of Richard Lovelace* (1925); A. C. Judson, "Who was Lucasta?" *MP*, xxiii (1925). 77-82.

With Lovelace may be linked two other Cavalier poets of rather slender performance but fragrant memory. Sidney Godolphin<sup>32</sup> (1610-1643), killed in a cavalry charge at Chagford, Devonshire, was of a distinguished Cornish family. He had studied in Oxford, sat in Parliament, and known Jonson, Donne, and Hobbes. On the first two he wrote notable obituary poems, interesting for their justice and for the way in which in each case Godolphin falls into the style of the poet he is celebrating. Hobbes, in turn, wrote Godolphin's praise in the dedication of his *Leviathan* (1651) to the poet's brother. Godolphin's love poems, one or two of which are exquisite (e.g., "Chloris, it is not thy disdain"), have the gentle manliness of Lovelace's with less finish. His longest work is a translation, in flowing couplets, of the fourth book of the *Aeneid*, in which Waller also had a hand.

The noble Marquis of Montrose<sup>33</sup> (1612-1650), hero and martyr of the royalist party in Scotland, left a few poems which have in them the headlong and heedless passion of the cause he served. Four lines out of a rambling series of "Love Verses" have made his literary fortune:

He either fears his fate too much,  
Or his deserts are small,  
Who dares not put it to the touch  
To gain or lose it all.

The son of a well-to-do London goldsmith, Robert Herrick<sup>34</sup> (1591-1633) took two degrees at Cambridge and formed his poetic style by study of the classic lyrics<sup>35</sup> and contact with Ben Jonson, then in his prime, whom he called "Saint Ben" and the best of poets. After some experience of court and military life he took orders, at nearly as late an age as Donne, and was presented to the rectory of Dean Prior in Devonshire, of which he says:

More discontents I never had  
Since I was born than here. . . .  
Yet justly too I must confess  
I ne'er invented such  
Ennobled numbers for the press  
Than where I loath'd so much.<sup>36</sup>

He was ejected from his living by the Puritan government in 1647, restored in 1662, and ultimately buried at Dean Prior at the age of eighty-three. There is little evidence that he affected his contemporaries in any degree. A single poem, *King Oberon's Feast*, was printed anonymously in a fairy miscellany in 1635, and three others in the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's *Poems*. "The Several Poems written by Master Robert Herrick," entered on the Stationers'

<sup>32</sup> See W. Dighton, *The Poems of Sidney Godolphin* (Oxford, 1931).

<sup>33</sup> See J. L. Weir, *Poems of James Graham, Marquis of Montrose* (1938).

<sup>34</sup> See F. W. Moorman, *Robert Herrick, a Biographical and Critical Study* (1910); *Poetical Works of Robert Herrick* (Oxford, 1915, 1935); F. Delattre, *Robert Herrick* (Paris, 1912).

<sup>35</sup> See Pauline Aiken, *The Influence of the Latin Elegists on English Lyric Poetry, 1600-1650, with Particular Reference to the Works of Robert Herrick* (1932); G. G. Loane, "Herrick's Sources," *N&Q*, CLXXVIII (1940). 224-225.

<sup>36</sup> *Discontents in Devon*.

Register, April 29, 1640, remained unprinted<sup>37</sup> till the appearance in 1648 of Herrick's only book, *Hesperides: or the Works both Humane and Divine of Robert Herrick Esq.*,<sup>38</sup> and the fame of this now precious volume was a growth of the nineteenth century.

Herrick is the delight and justification of the anthologist. Some twenty easily selected lyrics have made him immortal; the rest are not so much inferior as repetitive of his themes. He is the poet of strawberries and cream, of fairy lore and rustic customs, of girls delineated like flowers and flowers mythologized into girls; as in *To Carnations, a Song*:

Stay while ye will, or go,  
And leave no scent behind ye:  
Yet trust me, I shall know  
The place where I may find ye.

Within my Lucia's cheek  
(Whose livery ye wear)  
Play ye at hide or seek,  
I'm sure to find ye there.

*Corinna's Going a-Maying* is one of the most successful poems ever written in immortalizing a mood and depicting a contemporary scene, and its last stanza is unsurpassable in expression. These themes might cloy if Herrick were not a perfect craftsman and a brilliant ironist. Praising pagan love and pastoral beauty as he does, he seldom lets the reader forget that he is a gray-headed parson, who hates the country and abhors matrimony:

Before I went  
To banishment  
Into the loathed West,  
I co'd rehearse  
A lyric verse,  
And speak it with the best.

But Time (Ay me!)  
Has laid, I see,  
My Organ fast asleep,  
And turn'd my voice  
Into the noise  
Of those that sit and weep;

or (*To Perilla*)

Age calls me hence, and my gray hairs bid come,  
And haste away to mine eternal home,

or more jauntily,

<sup>37</sup> Delattre, p. 98, suggests a reason for the suspension of publication.

<sup>38</sup> The "pious pieces" in this volume are introduced by a special title-page calling them *His Noble Numbers* and bearing date 1647.

A bachelor I will  
Live as I have liv'd still,  
And never take a wife  
To crucify my life,

and

Love he that will; it best likes me  
To have my neck from love's yoke free,

and (in *To his Tomb-maker*)

Go I must; when I am gone,  
Write but this upon my stone:  
Chaste I liv'd, without a wife,  
That's the story of my life.  
Strewings need none: every flower  
Is in this word, Bachelor;

and finally, in *To All Young Men That Love*,

I could wish you all, who love,  
That ye could your thoughts remove  
From your mistresses, and be  
Wisely wanton (like to me).

By the time Herrick's volume was printed, with a dedication to Charles, Prince of Wales, the author was nearly sixty years old and the Cavalier cause was lost. Even the earliest poems in the collection speak of the poet's age, and it is not likely that it contains much unrevised youthful work. When viewed as the mature and consistent reflection of a man's mind, these usually delicious poems do not warrant us in assigning Herrick a very high place among clerical types. His satirical epigrams include some of the most brutal of their kind. He was neither a romantic idealist nor a believer in the golden mean, and his definition of beauty is a true measure of the man:

Beauty no other thing is than a beam  
Flash'd out between the Middle and Extreme,

that is, in the ironic middle ground between stoicism and enthusiasm.

But he had moments of lyric ecstasy in contemplating the flower-like beauties of earth or daydreaming of the supernatural; e.g., in *The Hag*:

The Hag is astride,  
This night for to ride,  
The Devil and she together:  
Through thick and through thin,  
Now out and then in,  
Though ne'er so foul be the weather.

And many times he achieves the calm perfection of Horace or Catullus, as in *To Sappho*:

## THE RENAISSANCE

Let us now take time and play,  
Love, and live here while we may;  
Drink rich wine, and make good cheer,  
While we have our being here:  
For once dead, and laid i' th' grave,  
No return from thence we have.

## XII

### Seventeenth-Century Poetry: IV. Links with the Restoration

The poets who carried the torch across the interregnum that divided Charles I's kingdom from Charles II's were mainly a conservative group lacking in the ardors for court or creed that marked most of those considered in the last two chapters. Of such, though he did not live to see the Restoration, was William Habington (1605-1654), a Catholic gentleman of quality closely contemporary with Waller and rather like him in spirit.<sup>1</sup> Had his life and creative ambition continued, Habington could have been expected to make the progress Waller did through a mild Cromwellianism to a sane acceptance of the Restoration ideal, but the literary work that he left includes only one volume of poetry and one play,<sup>2</sup> both completed by 1640 and both rather excellent in their kind. His *Castara*, printed in 1634 and twice expanded, was composed in honor of Lord Powis's daughter, Lucy Herbert, whom Habington married in the interval between Part I and Part II of the collection. His poetical name for himself is "Araphil" (i.e., Castaraphil), in imitation of Sidney's Astrophel.

William  
Habington

Habington is a likable person, who decries "writing wanton and profane" and altogether avoids it, showing indeed an excessive respect for his lady and her high-born relatives; but he can write well of good food and drink and introduces interesting topical allusions. One of his best poems is *Love's Anniversary* in the second part, which shows genuine and fine feeling. The one that immediately precedes this, *In Praise of the City Life in the Long Vacation*, is descriptive, and almost equally good. He generally employs the riming couplet and prefers the "open" variety. His shorter poems are commonly sets of seven couplets, which he would have called sonnets. *Castara* also includes, in its final version, four prose "characters": *A Mistress*, *A Wife*, *A Friend*, *A Holy Man*. The third part, first printed in 1640, has a larger proportion of song measures such as Waller used, in which, however, the subject is either ethical or religious.

Abraham Cowley<sup>3</sup> (1618-1667) was a lover of quiet in an unquiet age, a

<sup>1</sup> See a note on Habington by J. M. Nosworthy, *LTLS*, June 5, 1937, p. 428. *Castara* was reprinted by E. Arber (1870).

<sup>2</sup> For this play, *The Queen of Aragon*, see above, ch. v.

<sup>3</sup> For Cowley's life and literary importance see A. H. Nethercot, *Abraham Cowley, The Muse's Hannibal* (Oxford, 1931); and J. Loiseau, *Abraham Cowley, sa vie, son œuvre* (Paris, 1931). A good selected edition of his poems is "*The Mistress*," with other select Poems of



Abraham  
Cowley

man of moderate opinions and abilities led into rather absurd postures by the violence of his environment. The posthumous son of a London stationer (bookdealer), he received a sound classical education at Westminster School and earned a fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge, just in time to be dispossessed by the Puritan commissioners in April, 1644. Following his friends to the King's headquarters at Oxford, and later to the royalist center at Paris, he was involved in various sorts of secret service, which he performed so half-heartedly, or at least so unsuccessfully, that he was imprisoned by Cromwell as a spy and suspected by Charles II as a turncoat. In politics, however, as in poetry, he was a sincere man, and was as consistent as conditions and his mild nature permitted him to be. At the end he turned to the study of medicine and botany, living in the country, and composing the personal essays in English and the Latin poems on plants and flowers<sup>4</sup> which are among the most charming of all his works.

Cowley was one of the most precocious of English poets—he produced a successful volume of verse when fifteen;<sup>5</sup> and he was one of the most versatile and inventive in style. It is his misfortune that a large part of his work invites comparison with Donne and another part with Milton. His elegy on his Cambridge friend, William Hervey, a really noble and significant ode,<sup>6</sup> was written (1642) five years after *Lycidas*, and his incomplete biblical epic, *Davideis*, was published ten years before *Paradise Lost*. The *Davideis* once had readers, but its monotonous and self-conscious couplets could not long hold their attention. "Nothing," says Dr. Johnson, "can be more disgusting than a narrative spangled with conceits, and conceits are all that the *Davideis* supplies." It undoubtedly supplied certain hints to Milton, but it also supplied him with a justification for the vigorous words he used in explaining why *Paradise Lost* does not rime.

Cowley's  
Mistress

*The Mistress, or Several Copies of Love-Verses* (1647) contains nearly a hundred poems in various lyrical measures and very different moods. It purports to tell Cowley's sufferings through some three years at the hands of an unnamed lady of higher rank than his. Her friends oppose, and she does not admit his suit. At times he is so frank as to own that he does not wish her to; at other times he indulges in invectives against the inconstancy and venality of women, "the sex that's worst," and in rhetorical displays of his lacerated heart. History informs us that Cowley never married. *The Mistress* offers many reasons for the fact, most of them inconsistent with each other. An inserted dialogue dramatizing a successful love adventure<sup>7</sup> and a par-

Abraham Cowley, edited by John Sparrow (Nonesuch Press, 1926). His English works are printed complete by A. R. Waller (2v, Cambridge, 1905-6). Dr. Johnson's study of Cowley in his *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1779) has in many respects not been surpassed.

<sup>4</sup> For discussion of his extensive poetical writings in Latin see L. Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae* (1940), pp. 118-122.

<sup>5</sup> *Poetical Blossoms* (1633). It has been suggested that Cowley's precocity inspired Milton's reference to "some more timely-happy spirits" in the sonnet on his twenty-third year.

<sup>6</sup> This is written in nineteen 8-line stanzas of beautiful pattern. The language, though formal, shows true feeling and contains few "conceits."

<sup>7</sup> Camb. ed., pp. 147-148.

ticularly pretty eulogy of country life (*The Wish*) seem to have no connection with the rest of the sequence, if indeed that term can at all be applied to poems so slenderly connected.

Though Cowley followed Donne in the style of *The Mistress*, he followed him at a much greater distance than was formerly supposed, and his claim to the term *metaphysical* is rather shallow. Sometimes he begins a poem with a line that has the startling quality of Donne's openings, e.g.,

For Heaven's sake, what d' you mean to do?

or

By Heaven, I'll tell her boldly that 'tis she.

And sometimes he will develop an intricate metaphor, as that life and love represent double time, respectively short and long, like the double revolution of the sun,<sup>8</sup> while hope and fear are day and night; or he likens the lover's inconstancy to the vibration of a magnetic needle before it fixes on the true north;<sup>9</sup> or argues that as the substance of the body reproduces itself every five years, continued love of the same woman would be incest.<sup>10</sup> But these things are not the fabric of Cowley's thinking, as they are of Donne's; they are occasional ornaments, consciously selected and quite clearly worked out. Cowley's natural taste is more for plays on words:

What lover can like me complain,  
Who first lov'd vainly, next in vain;<sup>11</sup>

'Tis Hope is the most hopeless thing of all;<sup>12</sup>

and for neat similes from the natural or mythological world. Cowley's best poetry has more kinship with Pope's than with Donne's. It has precision of thought and metre, an excellence in small things, and a gay pessimism, which make *The Mistress* still good reading and *The Chronicle* and *Anacreontics* delightful. The grace and zest which Cowley was able to combine in his renderings of Anacreon may be illustrated in a quatrain:

A mighty pain to love it is,  
And 'tis a pain that pain to miss;  
But of all pains the greatest pain  
It is to love, but love in vain.

The sections on the grasshopper and the swallow in the same series (Nos. x and xi) are fresh enough to recall Leigh Hunt and Keats, for this was a kind of miniature poetry at which Cowley was deft both in English and Latin.

On the other hand, a considerable part of Cowley's early reputation and influence derived from the fifteen *Pindaric Odes*, in which he retained rime

<sup>8</sup> *Love and Life*, ed. cit., p. 91. Cowley follows the Ptolemaic theory.

<sup>9</sup> *Resolved to be Beloved*, p. 96.

<sup>10</sup> *Inconstancy*, p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> *The Vain Love*, p. 82.

<sup>12</sup> *Against Hope*, p. 109.

Pseudo-  
Pindaric  
Odes

but otherwise approximated to what is now known as free verse. Two of these poems are paraphrases of two odes of Pindar; others deal with subjects selected by the poet, in some cases ethical or religious, in others political or commendatory of living men, e.g., the philosopher Hobbes and the physician Dr. Charles Scarburgh. No effort was made to reproduce the actual structure of the odes of Pindar or to supply an equivalent, and the "pseudo-Pindaric," as it came to be called, offered little outlet for Cowley's best powers. However, the form, recommended by his name, became very popular, since it looks dignified and is easy to write; and in Cowley's imitators it grew to be a nuisance, until Dr. Johnson stamped it out with a sentence. "All the boys and girls," he said, "caught the pleasing fashion, and they who could do nothing else could write like Pindar."<sup>13</sup>

Andrew  
Marvell

The poetry of Andrew Marvell<sup>14</sup> (1621-1678), though not very copious, is of a memorable intellectual quality and of great range. Poems like *The Coronet* and *On a Drop of Dew* show his cleverness in building fluent rhythmic patterns in the service of moral conceits which verge on emblem poetry. Few poets except Crashaw have made so much of tears; note his *Mourning* and *Eyes and Tears*. The latter rises to these dubious heights:

Ope, then, mine eyes, your double sluice,  
And practise so your noblest use.  
For others too can see or sleep,  
But only human eyes can weep.

He is a poet of the virginal pleasures of earth, described with almost fantastic subtlety, as in these lines on the joy he feels in a garden:

The mind, that ocean where each kind  
Does straight its own resemblance find;  
Yet it creates, transcending these,  
Far other worlds and other seas,  
Annihilating all that's made  
To a green thought in a green shade.<sup>15</sup>

In his greatest poem, *To His Coy Mistress*, he raised the conceit to a glory which Donne never surpassed and gave mystic grandeur to the simple theme of Herrick's "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may":

<sup>13</sup> Alexander Brome (1620-1666) falls under the shadow of Cowley, whom he resembled in his main poetic qualities and in the outline of his life. A friend of Canary wine and an enemy of Roundheads, this trooper-lawyer was a voluble but not very ardent lover, and like Cowley was fond of complex rhythms. He had a reputation for Anacreontic joviality and wrote one comedy, *The Cunning Lovers* (1654), besides various volumes of verse (*Poems upon Several Occasions*, 1660; *Songs and Other Poems*, 1661, etc.) which, though printed after the Restoration, had been in large part written before. There is a modern selection, *Songs and Poems* (Louisville, 1924).

<sup>14</sup> See H. M. Margoliouth's edition of the poems and letters (2v, Oxford, 1927). See also A. Birrell, *Andrew Marvell* (EML Ser., 1905); Pierre Legouis, *André Marvell, poète, puritain, patriote* (Paris, 1928); V. Sackville-West, *Andrew Marvell* (1929); M. C. Bradbrook and M. G. Lloyd Thomas, *Andrew Marvell* (Cambridge, 1940); *Andrew Marvell, Tercentenary Tributes*, ed. W. H. Baggeley (Oxford, 1922).

<sup>15</sup> *The Garden*. Compare *The Nymph Complaining for the Death of Her Fawn*; and see M. C. Bradbrook, "Marvell and the Poetry of Rural Solitude," *RES*, xvii (1941). 37-46.

Had we but world enough, and time,  
 This coyness, Lady, were no crime. . . .  
 But at my back I always hear  
 Time's winged chariot hurrying near;  
 And yonder all before us lie  
 Deserts of vast eternity.

One who reads the intervening lines will read as fine an example as English poetry can show of wit blended with imagination; and the couplet with which the next movement of the poem ends is the perfection of tragic whimsicality:

The grave's a fine and private place,  
 But none, I think, do there embrace.

The son of a clergyman of moderate Puritan principles, Marvell was in politics a Parliamentarian. He sat, during the last twenty years of his life, as Member of Parliament for his native town, Hull in Yorkshire; and in 1657 became Milton's colleague in the Latin Secretaryship. His destiny, both in poetry and in politics, may have been determined by his appointment about 1650 as tutor to the daughter of the great Lord Fairfax, at whose house he lived for several years, writing in his patron's honor one of his longest poems, *Upon Appleton House*, and another, *Upon the Hill and Grove at Billborow*. These are interesting examples of local poetry, composed in what impresses us as an eighteenth-century style. To the same years at Appleton House (in Yorkshire) probably belongs most of Marvell's bucolic verse, which is best exemplified in the very charming *Mower* poems.

Much of Marvell's finest poetry deals with Oliver Cromwell, who has received no juster tributes. In the *Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland* (1650) he invented a unique metre no less grave and epical than its subject; and it is typical of the candor of Marvell's political verse that the most praised lines are those on King Charles I: Marvell on Cromwell

He nothing common did or mean  
 Upon that memorable scene;  
 But with his keener eye  
 The axe's edge did try,

Nor call'd the gods with vulgar spite  
 To vindicate his helpless right,  
 But bow'd his comely head  
 Down as upon a bed.

In three later poems (*The First Anniversary of the Government under his Highness the Lord Protector*, *The Victory Obtained by Blake over the Spaniards*, and *The Death of his Highness the Lord Protector*) Marvell appraises Cromwell's government and personality in heroic couplets which, for finish and argumentative skill, have little to learn from Dryden. Dryden is likewise anticipated in two satires: *Fleckno, an English Priest at Rome*

and *The Character of Holland*; and not infrequently Marvell's couplets seem to go beyond Dryden and find their affinities in Pope; e.g.,

Unhappy princes, ignorantly bred,  
By malice some, by error more misled;<sup>16</sup>

The object strange in him no terror mov'd:  
He wonder'd first, then pity'd, then he lov'd:<sup>17</sup>

or the brilliant simile with which the *First Anniversary* opens:

Like the vain curlings of the wat'ry maze,  
Which in smooth streams a sinking weight does raise,  
So man, declining always, disappears  
In the weak circles of increasing years;  
And his short tumults of themselves compose,  
While flowing Time above his head does close.

Marvell, the friend of Milton, has very little that is Miltonic in his style. Perhaps a slight suggestion of the young Milton may be found in the beautiful lines on the Pilgrim Fathers, "Where the remote Bermudas ride," but it is not close. He is a minor poet, but his few best poems are unsurpassed.

Edmund  
Waller

Edmund Waller<sup>18</sup> (1606-1687) lived over eighty years, in great worldly and social felicity, and wrote poetry for more than sixty. He was moderate in all things, and most moderate in his output, which hardly averaged above four or five pages of verse a year. He polished everything he touched to such effect that Pope admitted he was "smooth" and "sweet,"<sup>19</sup> and the editor of his poems in 1690 (Francis Atterbury) made for him the egregious claim that "he was, indeed, the parent of English verse, and the first that showed us our tongue had beauty and numbers in it." He produced a few charmingly modulated songs; e.g., *To Phyllis* ("Phyllis, why should we delay"), *On a Girdle*, and *Go, Lovely Rose*, in the last of which the sense and fragrance of Jonson's "I sent thee late a rosy wreath" and Herrick's "Gather ye rosebuds" are subtly blended. His avowed devotion to "Sacharissa" is not well authenticated, either in history or by his verse. One of his largest efforts was a brief mock-epic, *The Battle of the Summer Islands*, on an ineffectual attempt by the Bermudians to capture two stranded whales. A Member of Parliament from his sixteenth year and a cherished companion in all the courts there were, he produced acceptable panegyrics successively on Charles I, Oliver Cromwell, Charles II, and the Prince of Orange.

Though by 1660 Waller had reached an age at which most poets have ceased to write, half of his extant verse belongs to the Restoration period, and he is more typical of that era than of the stormier one that preceded. His

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *An Essay on Criticism*, 612 f.,  
The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,  
With loads of learned lumber in his head.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Essay on Man*, II. 217 ff.

<sup>18</sup> *The Poems of Edmund Waller*, ed. G. Thorn Drury (2v, 1905).

<sup>19</sup> *Epistle to Augustus*, line 267; *Essay on Criticism*, line 361.

favorite metre is the closed pentameter couplet, and he excels, as Pope did, in witty compliment; as in his New Year's verses to Lady Morton,

Madam, new years may well expect to find  
Welcome from you, to whom they are so kind;

or his lines on the British navy,

Others may use the ocean as their road,  
Only the English make it their abode;

or those on Lady Dorothy Sidney's (Sacharissa's) picture, which praise her above the heroines of her great-uncle's *Arcadia*,

This glorious piece transcends what he could think,  
So much his blood is nobler than his ink.

There is not much variety in Waller, and there is little growth. The famous "last verses" in his book hardly vary in style, though they do in strength, from those he wrote for Charles I before he was twenty.<sup>20</sup>

More distinctly even than Waller, Sir William Davenant<sup>21</sup> (1606-1668) and Sir John Denham<sup>22</sup> (1615-1669) belong to the Restoration period, though their most characteristic work was done before 1660. Both were loyal Cavaliers and friends of Charles I. Denham produced a tragedy in indifferent blank verse for the Blackfriars, *The Sophy* (1642), on lurid treacheries at the Persian court.<sup>23</sup> Davenant, who had considerable talent for comedy, did a number of more or less Fletcherian plays such as *The Wits* (1634), and several others, such as *Love and Honour* (1635) and *The Platonic Lovers* (1636), which touch upon the Platonic love theme that Queen Henrietta Maria delighted in.

In 1642 Denham's most famous poem, *Cooper's Hill*, was published, a desultory work of over three hundred lines in loosely flowing couplets, in which the author finds it possible to do justice to the neighboring places of interest—St. Paul's Cathedral, Windsor Castle, Runnymede—and their historical associations, to pay pleasant compliments to the poet Waller and King Charles, and describe a stag hunt with much detail. The hunt is far more like the hunting scenes in Pope's *Windsor Forest* (which *Cooper's Hill*

*Davenant  
and  
Denham*

*Denham's  
Cooper's  
Hill*

<sup>20</sup> Somewhat in the style of Waller are the poems (written about 1650) of Patrick Carey, brother of the famous Lord Falkland, which were introduced to the public in 1819 by (Sir) Walter Scott under the title of *Trivial Poems and Triolets* (reprinted by Saintsbury in *Caroline Poets*, II. 445-482). They are mainly dashing cavalier ditties asserting his independence in love; but they include also (for Carey had been a Roman Catholic abbé and had recanted) some religious pieces of simple feeling and fine rhythm.

<sup>21</sup> There is no satisfactory modern edition of Davenant. For discussion see A. Harbage, *Sir William Davenant, Poet Venturer* (Philadelphia, 1935); A. H. Nethercot, *Sir William Davenant, Poet-Laureate and Playwright-Manager* (Chicago, 1938); and C. M. Dowlin, *Sir William Davenant's Gondibert, Its Preface and Hobbes's Answer: A Study in English Neo-classicism* (Philadelphia, 1934).

<sup>22</sup> Denham is handsomely provided for in *The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham*, ed. T. H. Banks (New Haven, 1928).

<sup>23</sup> Robert Baron's tragedy, *Mirza*, on the same theme, appeared in 1647. Baron (1630-1658), a member of Gray's Inn, plagiarist of Milton, and friend of James Howell, published in 1647 *The Cyprian Academy*, a romantic narrative in inflated prose with large insertions of song and masque, and in 1650 *Pocula Castalia* which includes *Fortune's Tennis-Ball* (a romance in *Venus and Adonis* stanza) and *Eliza* (love poems).



resembles in many respects) than like the panther hunt in Chapman's *Hymn to Cynthia*, though Chapman was very recently dead when Denham wrote, while Pope was not to be born for another half century. The most notable lines are those which, while describing the Thames, came to be accepted as the classical description also of that new ideal of restraint that was replacing the "barbarism" of the Elizabethans:

O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream  
My great example, as it is my theme:  
Though deep yet clear, though gentle yet not dull,  
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full!

Davenant's  
Gondibert

Davenant's unfinished *Gondibert* (1651) is another work of which the significance depends upon what came after. It hardly connects at any point with earlier English poetry, but is an important landmark in neo-classic art. It was to be an epic on a very modern plan, presenting love and ambition in their highest forms. The verse is in quatrains as best fitted for singing, and the structure was to parallel that of a Fletcherian tragicomedy, with five books divided into half a dozen cantos each, after the analogy of acts and scenes. The characters and actions were to illustrate classic notions of poetic justice and ethical grandeur. "I intended in this poem," Davenant says,<sup>24</sup> "to strip Nature naked and clothe her again in the perfect shape of Virtue." However, instead of completing the work at leisure in America, whither he was going in the interests of the exiled Charles II, the poet found himself in prison on the Isle of Wight under indictment for high treason against the Commonwealth, and in that emergency published the first two books with commendatory verses by Waller and Cowley.<sup>25</sup> The long critical preface, reinforced by an "Answer" from Thomas Hobbes the philosopher, was so important a part of the design that it was published separately in 1650, a year before the poem itself.

<sup>24</sup> In his "Postscript" to the edition of 1651.

<sup>25</sup> Book Three was written during the poet's imprisonment and included in later editions, except the "seventh and last canto," which has been very recently recovered. See J. G. McManaway, "The 'Lost' Canto of *Gondibert*," *MLQ*, 1 (1940). 63-78.

# XIII

## Milton, "The Last Elizabethan"

Dr. Johnson called John Milton,<sup>1</sup> (1608-1674) with some justification, "an acrimonious and surly republican," and added that "scarcely any man ever wrote so much and praised so few."<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth contradicted such censure by saying that his soul was like a star and dwelt apart, and that he was "pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free";<sup>3</sup> but it is hard to avoid the impression that this tough-minded Galahad was, except in the halcyon period of his Italian journey, an unclubbable man. It is no uncommon phenomenon for critics to allow a coolness toward Milton's personality to warp their judgment of his work, to the ultimate and very mortifying confusion of the critics.<sup>4</sup> Time may still further alienate contemporary taste from Milton's temperament and from the subject matter of his writings; but, while poetry is poetry, time is not apt to change the perception a normal reader has of coming into a priceless and inalienable possession. Milton's poetry is as arrogantly supreme as his archangel, and to those who question it needs to reply only: "Not to know me argues yourselves unknown."

In 1645, at the height of the civil wars and in Milton's thirty-seventh year, the first collection of his poems appeared.<sup>5</sup> It is a small volume, for which the

<sup>1</sup> The most complete edition is *The Works of John Milton* (Columbia ed., 18v, 1931-38, with three supplements and Index, 2v, 1940); abridgment in one vol., *The Student's Milton* (poetry and most important prose), ed. F. A. Patterson (1933). *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. W. V. Moody (new ed., 1924) is still useful, as is Sir H. J. C. Grierson's ed. (2v, 1925). Other valuable texts include: *Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, Minor Poems, and Samson Agonistes*, ed. M. Y. Hughes (2v, 1937); *Poetical Works*, ed. H. C. Beeching (Oxford, 1938); *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*, ed. E. H. Visiak (1938). *A Milton Handbook* by J. H. Hanford (4ed., 1946) is admirable. Reference books include: E. N. S. Thompson, *John Milton, Topical Bibliography* (New Haven, 1916); D. H. Stevens, *Reference Guide to Milton from 1800 to the Present Day* (Chicago, 1930); H. F. Fletcher, *Contributions to a Milton Bibliography 1800-1930* (Urbana, 1931); J. Bradshaw, *A Concordance to the Poetical Works of John Milton* (1894); Lane Cooper, *A Concordance of the Latin, Greek, and Italian Poems of John Milton* (Halle a. S., 1923); L. E. Lockwood, *Lexicon of the English Poetical Works of John Milton* (1907); A. H. Gilbert, *A Geographical Dictionary of Milton* (New Haven, 1919); C. G. Osgood, *The Classical Mythology of Milton's English Poems* (new ed., Oxford, 1925); G. Sherburn, "The Early Popularity of Milton's Minor Poems," *MP*, xvii (1919-20), 259-278, 515-540; R. D. Havens, *The Influence of Milton on English Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass., 1922); Robert Bridges, *Milton's Prosody* (Oxford, 1921). *The Life of John Milton* by David Masson (7v, 1858-1881, with Index, 1894) is a venerable and imposing monument. *Milton* by Walter Raleigh (1900) is still one of the best introductions to the poet; and Rose Macaulay's briefer sketch, *Milton* (1935), is to be commended. Fuller discussion in E. M. W. Tillyard, *Milton* (1930), and *The Miltonic Setting* (Cambridge, 1938); and in Hilaire Belloc, *Milton* (1935).

<sup>2</sup> In *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1779).

<sup>3</sup> Sonnet, London, 1802.

<sup>4</sup> See L. P. Smith, *Milton and his Modern Critics* (1941); Douglas Bush, "Paradise Lost" in *Our Time* (Ithaca, 1945).

<sup>5</sup> *Poems of Mr. John Milton, both English and Latin*, facsimile edition (Douglas Replicas, 1924).

Milton and  
Spenser

publisher, Moseley, found a very fit description: "as true a birth as the muses have brought forth since our famous Spenser wrote." In his early poetry Milton turned as naturally to Spenser for inspiration as Spenser had to Chaucer. The intervening Spenserians moved him to little except some technical experiments,—as to try abbreviated variations of the nine-line stanza like the Fletcher brothers, or, like Browne of Tavistock, test the powers of the short couplet. The intervening anti-Spenserians of Donne's school moved him to hardly anything except an occasional slur on

those new-fangled toys and trimming slight,  
Which takes our late fantastics with delight.<sup>6</sup>

Milton was an accomplished poet at seventeen, as is proved by the charming elegy for his niece, *On the Death of a Fair Infant*:

O fairest flower, no sooner blown but blasted,  
Soft silken primrose fading timelessly.

It may suggest Keats more than Spenser,<sup>7</sup> but it is quite lovely, and is most Miltonic in the last stanza, which shows the poet already brooding on immortality. He bids his bereaved sister accept God's visitation with patience:

This if thou do, he will an offspring give  
That till the world's last end shall make thy name to live,

On the  
Morning of  
Christ's  
Nativity

such a child, that is, as Milton was; but his sister's next son was only Edward Phillips. The stanza is rime royal, Spenserized by substitution of an alexandrine in the seventh line. The same stanza is employed in the unfinished and unpromising ode on *The Passion* (1630) and in the introductory movement of the great ode *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, composed about Christmas, 1629, just after Milton's twenty-first birthday. The "hymn," of which this ode mainly consists, may seem less Spenserian, and indeed less Miltonic, for its religious spirit is as much Catholic as Puritan, and it has a naïve sensibility which may reflect the influence of Milton's Italian studies; but it is one of the most perfect poems in literature.<sup>8</sup> Since Spenser's *Epithalamion* there had been nothing that for sustained grace of rime and rhythm could well compare with these twenty-seven eight-line stanzas on the pattern, *a<sub>3</sub>a<sub>3</sub>b<sub>3</sub>c<sub>3</sub>c<sub>3</sub>b<sub>3</sub>d<sub>4</sub>d<sub>8</sub>*:

The lonely mountains o'er,  
And the resounding shore,  
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;  
From haunted spring and dale,  
Edged with poplar pale,  
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;

<sup>6</sup> *At a Vacation Exercise*. See G. R. Potter, "Milton's Early Poems, the School of Donne, and the Elizabethan Sonneteers," *PQ*, vi (1927). 396-400.

<sup>7</sup> The actual inspiration, as Tillyard notes, may have been the tenth poem in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, which in Milton's time was assumed to be Shakespeare's.

<sup>8</sup> See A. S. Cook, "Notes on Milton's Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity," *Trans. Conn. Acad.*, xv (1909). 307-368; Arthur Barker, "The Pattern of Milton's *Nativity Ode*," *Univ. of Toronto Quar.*, x (1941). 167-181.

With flower-inwoven tresses torn  
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

Three later and much briefer poems with religious application—*At a Solemn Music*, *On Time*, and *Upon the Circumcision*—show him developing his organ music in long sentences which, though still intricately rimed, foreshadow the verse paragraphs of *Paradise Lost*. At the same time he was essaying more staccato effects in the fine couplets on Shakespeare, "What needs my Shakespeare for his honor'd bones" (1630), which, being printed in the Second Folio two years later, was the first of Milton's English poems to be published.<sup>9</sup>

The two poems on the death of old Hobson (1631), a well-known Cambridge figure, do not fail of the rudimentary wit they attempt, but in Milton's career they are only curiosities.<sup>10</sup> More significant is the ambitious epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester (1631), for the tetrameter verse in which it is composed looks like practice work for *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. There is not a great deal to indicate whether these latter two suavely brilliant poems were written before Milton left Cambridge in 1632 or during the following years, which he spent at his father's country house at Horton near Stoke Poges.<sup>11</sup> Various "sources" for the pair have been suggested.<sup>12</sup> Milton is likely, for example, to have had in mind Burton's riming introduction to the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, published in the previous decade (1621); but his primary model was doubtless the companion poems, by Marlowe and Raleigh respectively, which he could have known in the *Passionate Pilgrim* volume of 1612 as well as from commonplace books. Marlowe's lyric concludes,

*L'Allegro  
and Il Pen-  
seroso*

And if these pleasures may thee move,  
Then live with me and be my love;

and Raleigh's,

These pretty pleasures might me move  
To live with thee and be thy love.

Milton's endings seem to echo them; but it is characteristic that he puts himself in the place of the passionate shepherd's nymph, and fancies himself wooed by two ways of life.

The two poems are most artfully balanced and contrasted. Each opens with a ten-line strophe, riming *a<sub>3</sub>b<sub>5</sub>b<sub>3</sub>a<sub>5</sub>c<sub>3</sub>d<sub>5</sub>d<sub>3</sub>c<sub>5</sub>e<sub>3</sub>c<sub>5</sub>*; and then passes into tetrameter couplets, in which iambic and trochaic rhythms are restfully in-

<sup>9</sup> See H. W. Garrod, "Milton's Lines on Shakespeare," *E&S*, xii (1926). 1-23.

<sup>10</sup> See W. R. Parker, "Milton's Hobson Poems," *MLR*, xxxi (1936). 395-402; G. B. Evans, "Two New Manuscript Versions of Milton's Hobson Poems," *MLN*, lvii (1942). 192-194, and "Milton and the Hobson Poems," *MLQ*, iv (1943). 281-290.

<sup>11</sup> On these poems see Tillyard, *The Miltonic Setting*, pp. 1-28; and S. R. Watson, "Milton's Ideal Day; Its Development as a Pastoral Theme," *PMLA*, lvii (1942). 404-420.

<sup>12</sup> See J. L. Lowes, "*L'Allegro* and *The Passionate Shepherd*," *MLR*, vi (1911). 206-209; S. F. Damon, "Milton and Marston," *PMLA*, xlii (1927). 873-874, and A. Thaler, *PMLA*, xliii (1928). 569-570; Lawrence Babb, "The Background of *Il Penseroso*," *SP*, xxxvii (1940). 257-273.

termingled—though there are, as is proper, twice as many of the lighter trochaic lines in the poem addressed to Mirth as in the other. There is little extended nature description or autobiographical detail in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. The great merits of these poems are curiously like those of the famous *Elegy* of that other London scrivener's son, Thomas Gray, who, if he had lived a century earlier, would have been Milton's near neighbor in Buckinghamshire. Milton lacks the special "graveyard" interest and strain of sentimentality; his vignettes are sharper, but, like Gray's, they express the reflections of a bookish man in pastoral scenery with a supreme felicity. Marvell may sometimes have approached perfection in this genre, but few others, surely, in English poetry.

*The Lawes  
Brothers*

*Arcades*

From his boyhood in London, Milton had been a friend of the talented brothers, Henry and William Lawes, now prominent musicians and gentlemen of the King's Chapel. The elder and more eminent brother, Henry,<sup>13</sup> was also music-tutor in the family of the Earl of Bridgewater; and it was probably through this connection that Milton was brought to attempt the masque in *Arcades*, or "The Arcadians," which has interesting associations. It was written soon after the poet had left Cambridge, and was presented in honor of the Countess Dowager of Derby, the matriarch of the numerous and powerful family to which Lord Bridgewater belonged. This great lady was the last survivor of the three sisters with whom Spenser had claimed kinship,

The honor of the noble family,  
Of which I meanest boast myself to be.<sup>14</sup>

As Lady Strange, Spenser had made her patroness of his *Tears of the Muses*, and as Amaryllis he had praised her in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*. Now, twice widowed and a septuagenarian, she still resided at Harefield, ten miles or so from Horton, where she had been mistress for thirty years and had entertained Queen Elizabeth in 1602. Milton's contribution to the open-air pageant which the old lady's family produced for her amusement is in the spirit of this history. *Arcades* is not a Stuart masque but an Elizabethan "entertainment," such as the Virgin Queen had been habitually greeted with in her progresses. It is very short, consisting merely of fifty-eight lines of mythologizing compliment spoken by the "Genius of the Wood" and three delightful songs, of which the last,

Nymphs and shepherds, dance no more  
By sandy Ladon's liliated banks,

evokes the whole wistful beauty of the Greek pastoral.

*Comus*

Shortly after this, the Earl of Bridgewater, who had married the Countess of Derby's daughter and was besides her stepson, took up his residence at Ludlow Castle, Shropshire, as Lord President of Wales, and there *Comus* was presented, September 29, 1634. As in *Arcades*, Milton supplied the words

<sup>13</sup> See W. M. Evans, *Henry Lawes, Musician and Friend of Poets* (1941).

<sup>14</sup> *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, lines 537 f.

and Henry Lawes the music.<sup>15</sup> Lawes also played the part of the Attendant Spirit, while the two brothers and the lady in the piece were acted by the three youthful children of the earl, grandchildren of the lady of *Arcades*. *Comus* is Milton's first poem in blank verse. It is, indeed, the only thing of any importance that he wrote in that form before *Paradise Lost*; but his mastery is apparent in the first sentence,

Before the starry threshold of Jove's court  
My mansion is, . . .

which in eleven lines sweeps the hearer from heaven to earth and back again, and in referring to "the crown that Virtue gives" sets the theme not only for this poem but for most of what Milton wrote later.<sup>16</sup> Virtue is, in truth, the theme of *Comus*; not chastity merely, and not the "fugitive and cloistered virtue," which Milton cannot praise, "unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary";<sup>17</sup> but something closer to the Virtue which, as Marlowe's Tamburlaine had said,

solely is the sum of glory,  
And fashions men with true nobility,<sup>18</sup>

the dynamic Virtue that, in Milton's words,

could see to do what Virtue would,  
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon  
Were in the flat sea sunk,<sup>19</sup>

and which

may be assail'd, but never hurt,  
Surpris'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd;  
Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm  
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.<sup>20</sup>

In it, as is declared in the poem's closing words, are summed up human freedom, aspiration, and security:

Mortals that would follow me,  
Love Virtue; she alone is free;  
She can teach you how to climb  
Higher than the sphery chime:  
Or if Virtue feeble were,  
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

*Comus* is a true enough masque. It combines in pleasing balance the usual elements of personal compliment, classic story, and opulent song; it provides

<sup>15</sup> There is a handsome edition, with the music: *The Mask of Comus*, ed. E. H. Visiak (Nonesuch Press, 1938).

<sup>16</sup> See A. S. P. Woodhouse, "The Argument of Milton's *Comus*," *Univ. of Toronto Quar.*, xi (1941), 46-71; E. M. W. Tillyard, "The Action of *Comus*," *E&S*, xxviii (1943), 22-37.

<sup>17</sup> *Areopagitica* (1644).

<sup>18</sup> See above, Part II, ch. XI.

<sup>19</sup> *Comus*, lines 373 ff.

<sup>20</sup> *Comus*, lines 589 ff.



for the "measure" or main dance and for elaborate scenic spectacle, and has moments of dramatic tension. But it must have been very surprising to those who came to it with minds attuned either to Prynne's recent moral castigation of the masques or to Bacon's condescending words, "These things are but toys."

Lycidas

Milton, in his early poems, was a perfectionist beyond almost any other English writer except Gray. When called upon for a contribution to the memorial volume in honor of his college friend, Edward King, who had been drowned in the Irish Sea in August, 1637, he still thought of himself, though near the end of his twenty-ninth year, as an uncouth (i.e., untaught) swain, "warbling his Doric lay," a phrase which means much the same as the "native woodnotes wild" that he imputed to Shakespeare. The incomparable *Lycidas*, "probably the most perfect piece of pure literature in existence,"<sup>21</sup> opens with an apology for the poet's immaturity which is as sincerely humble as it is obviously unnecessary:

Yet once more, O ye laurels . . .  
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,  
And with forc'd fingers rude  
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.

*Lycidas* almost eludes criticism. It was possible for Dr. Johnson to miss its beauties altogether, and it is very common for its beauties to drive commentators into wholly uncritical ecstasies. Milton's own appraisal is sound, though phrased too self-depreciatingly,

He touch'd the tender stops of various quills;<sup>22</sup>

that is, he handled, in a tentative manner, a number of styles. The voice of St. Peter, thundering against King's self-indulgent fellow-clerics (lines 108-131), is very different from that of the Sicilian Muse, piping the purest pagan pastoralism (132-151); and both are unlike the voice in which Milton questions his own destiny (64-84), or the other voice, by no means too conventional or too restrained, in which at the opening and the close he testifies to his friendship with King and to the pathos of the latter's premature end.

Though an astonishingly short poem to hold all the electric charges that it contains—it has 193 lines—*Lycidas* was over long in comparison with the other contributions to the anthology for which it was written. Milton has expressed his feelings in four or five movements, not, as he recognized himself, very logically connected. They are, however, fundamentally connected by the underlying theme, *Ars longa, vita brevis*, and develop the emotion of the sonnet on his twenty-third year. That sonnet had been written at the close of his long training at Cambridge; *Lycidas* was written five or six years

<sup>21</sup> Arthur Machen, *The Hill of Dreams* (Works, 1923, III, 127). See J. C. Ransom, "A Poem almost Anonymous" in *The World's Body* (1938), pp. 1-28; T. P. Harrison, *The Pastoral Elegy* (Austin, 1939). For the poet's original version see F. A. Patterson, *The Cambridge Manuscript of John Milton's Lycidas and Some of the Other Poems, Reproduced from the Collotype Facsimile* (Facsimile Text Soc., 1933).

<sup>22</sup> *Lycidas*, line 188.

later, near the close of his further training at Horton. His spring is still late, his destiny uncertain, and King's untimely death forces angry questions from him, concerning

The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne;  
Th' assay so hard, so sharp the conquering.<sup>23</sup>

The "blind mouths" at whom St. Peter rails

Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold,

and are content; while the unrecovered bones of King, who had shared Milton's ascetic discipline, are the plaything of life's accidents, hurled beyond the stormy Hebrides, or otherwise into nullity. "Alas, what boots it?" he asks of his own life.

Were it not better done, as others use,  
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade?

The elegy, like the sonnet, is the outcry of one spur-galled by Fame, which he can call by no better title than "that last infirmity of noble mind," and can hope for nowhere but in heaven. It is no easy thing to make oneself the last of the giant race. Nothing would satisfy Milton but to be a Spenser, and nothing that his age created seemed to be above the stature of a Marvell. This is the heart-breaking truth of *Lycidas*. The Spenserian trumpet is at last in his hand, perfect in every varied cadence and learned grace—the soul-animating strains await his call—and life has given him no will to blow it.

Milton's nineteen <sup>24</sup> English sonnets, supplemented by five others and a *canzone* in Italian, have an importance out of all proportion to their number. Scattered thinly over nearly thirty years of his life, they give the most consecutive record of his poetic feeling, from the fragile love-longing of the first one, *To the Nightingale* (c. 1630), to the august vision of his deceased wife in 1658. If his sonnets are to be compared with any earlier ones in English, it must be with Sidney's; but the connection is not close. The movement Sidney started had faded out, and Milton kindled the lamp afresh at Italian fires. It may be guessed that his school-companion, Charles Diodati, was the cause of his special Italian interests, and probably the means of his acquaintance with the Italian girl, a certain Emilia, to whom he wrote the six poems in her own tongue that exhibit a remarkable ease and correctness. They develop very pleasantly the amorous note of the "nightingale" sonnet and probably followed it closely in date.

The sonnet on his three-and-twentieth year, written most likely after he had become twenty-four (December 9, 1632),<sup>25</sup> introduces a sober note which

<sup>23</sup> Chaucer, *The Parlement of Foules*.

<sup>24</sup> One is the "caudate" or tailed sonnet, "Because you have thrown off your prelate lord." The best edition of Milton's sonnets is that of J. S. Smart (Glasgow, 1921). See J. H. Hanford, "The Arrangement and Dates of Milton's Sonnets," *MP*, xviii (1921), 475-483.

<sup>25</sup> See W. R. Parker, "Some Problems in the Chronology of Milton's Early Poems," *RES*, xi (1935), 276-283.

thereafter is seldom absent. Those to the "Captain, or colonel, or knight-in-arms" (1642) and to the unknown young lady who had chosen "the better part with Mary and with Ruth"; the friendly ones to the Lady Margaret Ley, Harry Lawes, Edward Lawrence, and Cyriac Skinner, and the obituary on another old friend, Mrs. Katherine Thomason, show Milton in more genial mood than anything else that he wrote after Diodati's death; but there is deep gravity in all these, for Milton did not lightly turn to sonneting. For the rest, indignation over the abuse of his divorce pamphlets, the massacre in Piedmont, his blindness, the loneliness that followed the loss of his most beloved wife,<sup>26</sup> and four great political crises lighted the slow fires in which they were annealed. All are strictly Italian in form, more in the sixteenth-century style of Tasso and Giovanni della Casa than in the earlier style of Petrarch. In only one of the English sonnets, that addressed to Cromwell, does the sestet conclude with a couplet, though three of the Italian ones have this ending. In just half, the sense is carried on vigorously from octave to sestet without appreciable pause, and this half includes the four most famous examples: "Cromwell, our chief of men," "Avenge, O Lord," "When I consider how my light is spent," and "Methought I saw my late espoused saint." This feature, though not according to the Petrarchan plan, is neither an innovation nor a blemish. Milton would have been less Milton, if he had not seen the value of such *enjambement*. The nineteen sonnets are like a hoard of ancient coins, few and precious. They are deeply, but frugally, incised, heavy with significance and intrinsic worth, and for all posterity they bear a Caesarian superscription.

<sup>26</sup> On the question which wife this was, see W. R. Parker, "Milton's Last Sonnet," *RES*, xxi (1945). 235-238.

## XIV

### Milton's Latin Poems and Prose Works

The technique of Milton's Latin poems,<sup>1</sup> like that of his sonnets, has always been most highly praised by those, from Dr. Johnson to Professor Rand,<sup>2</sup> who have best understood the history and aims of the medium in which he worked. "In all the Latin poems of Milton," said Macaulay,<sup>3</sup> "the artificial manner indispensable to such works is admirably preserved, while at the same time his genius gives to them a peculiar charm, an air of nobleness and freedom, which distinguishes them from all other writings of the same class." Classic as his language is, Milton was not merely attempting replicas of antique correctness. He was also competing with such impressive modern rivals as George Buchanan (1506-1582), with men, that is, who had found Latin verse the most practical conveyor of their most earnest thought. When he had persuaded himself, as he tells us in the *Reason of Church Government* (1641), that "I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes as they should not willingly let it die," it was to Latin, and the world-audience that Latin then commanded, that he mainly addressed his efforts. Only slowly, "long choosing and beginning late," did he realize that "it would be hard to arrive at the second rank among the Latins," and so resolve "to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue."

Milton's  
Latin  
Poems

When Milton published his Latin poems in the volume of 1645, he divided them, in accordance with a pedantic convention of his time, into two books distinguished only by the metres employed; that is, a book of "elegies" in the Ovidian couplet, and another book of "*silvae*" in other forms. This separation must be disregarded by those who wish to study them either chronologically or in relation to subject matter. His earliest extant Latin verses date from the period of his residence at Cambridge (1625-1632), and some are, like his *Prolusions* in Latin prose,<sup>4</sup> incidental to his regular studies. The short epitaph on the university "Bedell" (*Elegy* ii, 1626) is little more than a more learned parallel to the English verses on Hobson which he was writing about the same time. The contemporary poems on the deaths of Launcelot

<sup>1</sup> The text, often with a prose translation, is found in most editions of Milton's poetry. See previous chapter, note 1, and also W. MacKellar, *The Latin Poems of John Milton* (New Haven, 1930); L. Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae* (1940), pp. 111-118; G. B. A. Fletcher, "Milton's Latin Poems," *MP*, xxxvii (1940), 343-350; F. R. B. Godolphin, "Notes on the Technique of Milton's Latin Elegies," *MP*, xxxvii (1940), 351-356. The Latin poems have been translated into English verse by William Cowper (1808) and by Walter Skeat, *Milton's Lament for Damon and His Other Latin Poems* (1935).

<sup>2</sup> See E. K. Rand, "Milton in Rustication," *SP*, xix (1922), 109-135.

<sup>3</sup> Essay on Milton (1825).

<sup>4</sup> See P. B. and E. M. W. Tillyard, *Milton: Private Correspondence and Academic Exercises, translated from the Latin* (Cambridge, 1932).

In Quintum  
Novembris

Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester (*Elegy* iii), the Bishop of Ely (*Silvae* iii), and the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge (*Silvae* i), cleverly suited to the professions of their subjects and most adroitly phrased, belong with the English lines on the death of the Marchioness of Winchester. The longer epic piece on the Fifth of November (*Silvae* ii, 1626), in 226 hexameters, follows an already established tradition of celebrating the frustration of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 in Latin verse. Phineas Fletcher's *Locustae*, on the same subject and in similar style, though not printed till 1627, had been circulating in manuscript for some fifteen years.<sup>5</sup> It is characteristic of the young Milton that he secures his dénouement by the combined efforts of the Christian God and the Virgilian deity, Fama. Five brief epigrams in elegiac verse have dropped like chips about this larger work: They combine allusions to the death of James I in 1625 with remembrances of his escape from the gunpowder treason.

Poems on  
Spring and  
Love

Formal university occasions produced the eloquent hexameter declamation, "That Nature is not subject to old age,"<sup>6</sup> which smacks of Lucretius and effectively contrasts the pagan and Christian ideas of the fate of the universe, and also produced a sort of dramatic monologue in iambic trimeter,<sup>7</sup> in which the poet imagines Aristotle ridiculing the Platonic conception of the "archetype" or perfect man. But no formal occasion produced the fine fifth elegy, *On the Coming of Spring*, written at the age of twenty during Milton's fourth year at Cambridge (1629). Linking wistful thoughts of love with a charming susceptibility to vernal impulses, this poem is in mood like the sonnet to the nightingale and the brief English *Song on May Morning*, but it is ten times as long, and is Milton's prettiest piece of paganism. Less mature and more mawkish is the other May poem, written the year before, but printed at the end of the series of elegies (*Elegy* vii), which records a fit of boyish love for a girl he has seen but once. It is reassuring to know that Milton could be very young, and the poem has had more than its meed of praise. Nothing in it is more sophomoric than the postscript, which announces that the author's Socratic studies at the university have now made him immune to such follies.

Milton and  
Diodati

The rest of Milton's Latin poems are, with hardly an exception, tributes of friendship or attempts at self-analysis. They have a direct personal quality which only rarely breaks through the Olympian grandeur of his English poetry. Chief of all his friends was Charles Diodati, his Anglo-Italian schoolmate at St. Paul's, who has the place in Milton's life that Richard West has in Gray's. When Milton, like Gray, went to Cambridge, Diodati, like West, had chosen Oxford, and the correspondence between them produced the richest outpouring that we have of the young poet's private thoughts. The first of the Elegies was written to Diodati during Milton's second year at Cambridge. It was written, however, from his father's house in London, to which he had been "sent down" or rusticated in consequence of some infrac-

<sup>5</sup> See above, Part II, ch. x; and L. Bradner, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-71.

<sup>6</sup> *Silvae* iv (1628?): *Naturam Non Pati Senium*.

<sup>7</sup> *Silvae* v: *De Idea Platonica quemadmodum Aristoteles Intellexit*.

tion of college discipline, presumed to have been a disagreement with his tutor. It is a delightful poem, thoroughly undergraduate. He speaks with a touch of braggadocio of his disregard for Cambridge and his pleasure at being in London, of his joy in quiet reading and (as in *L'Allegro*) in play-going; then launches into a long praise of the London girls, and ends by saying that he is about to return to college. The next extant verse letter to Diodati was written several years later, in the Christmas season of 1629. It was printed as the sixth elegy, and is contemporary with the ode *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, to which it makes important reference in its closing lines. In this very illuminating poem, written just after Milton had passed his twenty-first birthday, we see him poised between the lighter and the severer muse. Taking his hint from the letter of Diodati to which he is replying, he begins by generously praising the poetry of sensuous emotion, such as his own May poems were; and then, in words that have been often quoted (lines 55 ff.), he takes his stand with the epic moralists who have scorned delights and lived laborious days. One of the Italian sonnets is addressed to Diodati, and two letters in Latin prose have survived out of the probably large correspondence between them, but nothing else on Milton's side till Diodati's early death evoked the *Epitaphium Damonis*.

Diodati died at London in August, 1638, just a year after Edward King; but Milton was then in Florence, and he did not put his sorrow into words till two years later, when he had returned to the sights they had known together. A reversed parallel occurred, long after, when Arthur Hugh Clough died in Florence (1864) and in the course of time Arnold wrote his *Thyrsis*, the poem which the *Epitaphium Damonis* ("The Lament for Damon") most resembles. This is almost the barest of Milton's poems, and is more Greek in spirit than Latin. There is a marked avoidance of the mythological ornament that Milton uses with such luxuriant grace elsewhere, and the pastoral convention seems to be maintained with difficulty; chiefly, one might say, through the oft repeated refrain by which, in the fashion of Theocritus and Moschus, he divides the moods of grief,

Epitaphium  
Damonis

Ite domum, impasti; domino iam non vacat, agni.

Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare;  
My thoughts are all now due to other care.<sup>8</sup>

The reality of Milton's loss and the genuineness of his sorrow are unquestionable. It is dry sorrow, sometimes expressed in words of Arnoldian bitterness; e.g.,

We men, Fate-driven, endure a sterner life:  
Minds all estrangement, hearts distract with strife.  
Scarce, haply, shalt thou find,  
E'en out of thousands, one true kindred mind.

<sup>8</sup> Cowper's translation.



Or if thy vows from Chance win late relief,  
 Some day, some hour unween'd of, shall betide  
 To snatch him from thy side,  
 Leaving thee agelong, nay, eternal, grief.<sup>9</sup>

With the exception of the early poem on the Fifth of November, this is the longest of Milton's Latin poems. Toward the end (lines 162 ff.), he outlines briefly the contents of a Latin epic from early British history which he has been meditating; and, as if such projects were distasteful without Diodati, says that he will abandon poetry, or content himself to write in a language which will confine his fame to his native island, for "omnia non licet uni," one man cannot do all things. Rather curiously, the final picture of Damon's reception into heaven is introduced by the most highly colored passage in the poem, a description of the two ornate "cups" which Milton had received from the Marquis Manso.<sup>10</sup>

Ad Patrem

The finely self-portraying poem to his father (*Silvae* vi) has not been certainly dated, but seems to belong to the latter rather than the earlier part of the Horton period (1632-1638). It presents a much more confirmed mind than the sonnet on his twenty-third year and acknowledges opportunities for culture in excess of a college education. It shows also that any desire the elder Milton had to see his son follow him into the legal profession had been definitely given up. The subject is Milton's choice of a poet's life, which he now regards as final, and the purpose is to thank his father for extraordinary generosity and to disabuse his mind of doubts which the poet in no way shares. He is modest, affectionate, and respectful; but he sees immortality in no too distant prospect. One would say that *Comus*, if not *Lycidas*, was behind him when he wrote. Whatever the respective dates, *Ad Patrem* is a more assured poem than *Lycidas*.

Milton's  
 Complimentary  
 Poems

Manso

Of the complimentary poems written by Milton during his Italian journey of 1638-39, the one to the Roman poet, Salsilli,<sup>11</sup> is content to be semi-humorous, and is designedly written in the ungainly *scanzotes*, or "limping" trimeter. Salsilli was ill, and Renaissance etiquette prescribed light verse from his literary friends during convalescence. The three epigrams to the Roman singer, Leonora Baroni, express the proper adulation of a music-lover for a *diva*. The poem to Manso, the venerable Marquis of Villa,<sup>12</sup> though also full of flattery (for Milton had much kindness to repay), is of noble quality. "Never before," Macaulay said of it, "were such marked originality and such exquisite mimicry found together." Milton recalls that Manso had been the loyal friend and patron of two great poets, Tasso and Marini; and this leads him to assert the claim of the Britons to have been also worshippers of Apollo in ages past, and his own expectation of writing a poem on the wars of King Arthur. When Milton gave his mind to it, he

<sup>9</sup> Lines 106-111, Skeat's translation.

<sup>10</sup> See M. de Filippis, "Milton and Manso: Cups or Books?" *PMLA*, LI (1936). 745-756; D. C. Dorian, "Milton's *Epitaphium Damonis*, lines 181-197," *PMLA*, LIV (1939). 612-613.

<sup>11</sup> *Silvae* VII.

<sup>12</sup> *Silvae* VIII.

could excel most poets in the arts of complaisance. With these adult examples might be compared the boyishly affectionate letter (*Elegy* iv) written at the age of eighteen to his former tutor, Thomas Young;<sup>13</sup> and the last of all his Latin poems, the Pindaresque ode, both grave and gay in mood, which he addressed in 1647 to the Librarian of the Bodleian, John Rouse, when making a wartime gift of his published works to his second university of Oxford.

Milton's verse is small in amount, when compared with that of the other greatest English poets. Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning, for example, have all left a great deal more; but no supreme poet, perhaps, except Goethe has left so much or such important prose.<sup>14</sup> It is in Latin and in English, according as he was addressing himself to international or to native readers, and it touches all the themes and emotions which moved him deeply. There is no light prose in Milton. It is the prose of a classical humanist, and the question it raises for modern readers is the question of decorum. It ranges constantly from earth to heaven, from violent and vulgar invective to passages of truly poetical loftiness. It is continually passing above or below the narrow scope of our polite writers, but to call it rude, or allege that in Milton "a useful art had not learned to be also fine," is to apply irrelevant standards. Prose was never in low esteem with the Renaissance scholars in whose tradition Milton wrote.<sup>15</sup> They were apt to set Cicero and Demosthenes not far below Virgil and Homer as artists, and would seldom admit that poetry was necessarily verse-writing. The Bible, which was the book of books, offered a vast gradation of styles. Milton used them all in his prose, and perhaps extended the lower reaches; but in nearly all his English pamphlets, and most frequently in *Areopagitica* (1644), he would soar, when fit emotion warmed him, into starry symphonies which an admirer of literary art would no more wish to be expressed in verse than he would wish *Paradise Lost* written in the metre of *Lycidas*.

In a famous autobiographical digression in one of his earliest controversial pieces,<sup>16</sup> Milton admits that in such writing he has "the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand," and speaks of himself as "sitting here below in the cool element of prose." But his left hand quickly acquired all the

<sup>13</sup> See W. R. Parker, "Milton and Thomas Young, 1620-1628," *MLN*, LIII (1938), 399-407.

<sup>14</sup> *The Prose Works of John Milton* have been edited by J. A. St. John (5v, 1848-1853); convenient selections by Henry Morley (1889) and M. W. Wallace (*World's Classics*, 1925), the latter with an excellent introduction. See also E. N. S. Thompson, "The True Bearing of Milton's Prose" in *Essays on Milton* (New Haven, 1914, ch. III), and "Milton's Prose Style," *PQ*, xiv (1935), 1-15; and for historical background D. M. Wolfe, *Milton in the Puritan Revolution* (1941); and M. Y. Hughes, "Milton as a Revolutionary," *ELH*, x (1943), 87-116. The following recent works bear helpfully upon Milton's life and political standing: J. S. Dickhoff, *Milton on Himself* (1939), and "Critical Activity of the Poetic Mind: John Milton," *PMLA*, LV (1940), 748-772; J. M. French, *Milton in Chancery, New Chapters in the Lives of the Poet and his Father* (1939); W. R. Parker, *Milton, 1641-1674*, etc. (Columbus, O., 1940); J. M. French, "That Late Villain Milton," *PMLA*, LV (1940), 102-115; Z. S. Fink, *The Classical Republicans* (Evanston, 1945; *Northwestern Univ. Stud. in the Humanities*, IX).

<sup>15</sup> See J. H. Hanford, "Milton and the Return to Humanism," *SP*, xvi (1919), 126-147.

<sup>16</sup> *The Reason of Church Government*, Book II (Wallace, ed. cit., p. 109).

rather horrid skills of contemporary polemic, and his prose was very seldom cool. The remarkable last paragraph of another early pamphlet<sup>17</sup> shows how easily he can combine sinuous majesty of style and real exaltation of spirit with sentiments which we should hardly judge appropriate,—wishing and solemnly asserting that ambitious prelates of Laud's type “after a shameful end in this life (which God grant them) shall be thrown down eternally into the darkest and deepest gulf of hell . . .” So Dante might have written, but on the previous page there is a sentence that more suggests Sir Walter Raleigh:

That we may still remember in our solemn thanksgivings, how for us the northern ocean, even to the frozen Thule, was scattered with the proud shipwrecks of the Spanish Armada, and the very maw of hell ransacked, and made to give up her concealed destruction, ere she could vent it in that horrible and damned blast.

As Milton's early feelings are best known to us through his Latin poems, so his mature personality is most fully presented in his prose. The four tracts on divorce (1643-1645), though immediately occasioned by his unsatisfactory experience with his ill-chosen first wife, Mary Powell, are very ably reasoned and contain some of his most sympathetic writing. There is something pitiful in the ardor with which he pleads for a more than physical basis of matrimony and a more liberal interpretation of ecclesiastical law:

Was our Saviour so mild and so favorable to the weakness of a single man, and is he turned on the sudden so rigorous and inexorable to the distresses and extremities of an ill-wedded man? Did he so graciously give leave to change the better single life for the worse married life? Did he open so to us this hazardous and accidental door of marriage to shut upon us like the gate of death, without retracting or returning . . . ?<sup>18</sup>

The divorce pamphlets and the great *Arcopagitica*, “for the liberty of unlicensed printing,” of the same period made Milton a marked man with many calumniators, but had little effect upon the opinions of the Parliament to which they were addressed. He replied to his enemies in his three least dignified sonnets, accepted the submission of his wife, and during three or four years devoted himself to the intense studies that resulted in his imposing *History of Britain*<sup>19</sup> and his enormous Latin treatise on *Christian Doctrine*.<sup>20</sup> The arraignment of Charles I brought him once more before the public with one of his best argued and quietest, though boldest, pamphlets, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*,<sup>21</sup> in which from the proposition that “All men were naturally born free” he develops the principle of the social contract and the corollary that subjects are justified in putting an unworthy

<sup>17</sup> *Of Reformation Touching Church-discipline.*

<sup>18</sup> *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1645), Book II, ch. 9.

<sup>19</sup> See J. M. French, “Milton as a Historian,” *PMLA*, L (1935), 469-479.

<sup>20</sup> See J. H. Hanford, “The Date of Milton's *De Doctrina Christiana*,” *SP*, xvii (1920), 309-319; Arthur Sewall, *A Study of Milton's Christian Doctrine* (Oxford, 1939); Maurice Kelley, *This Great Argument, a Study of Milton's De Doctrina Christiana as a Gloss upon Paradise Lost* (Princeton, 1941).

<sup>21</sup> Ed. W. T. Allison (1911).

king to death.<sup>22</sup> He closes with an attack upon the Presbyterians, who, after warring against King Charles and imprisoning him, were now opposing his trial by Parliament.

Parliament was grateful for this justification, which happened to appear in print just after the king's execution (February, 1649), and Milton in the next month was appointed Secretary for Foreign Tongues in the Council of State. This gave him charge of the government's foreign correspondence and made him the official apologist of the Commonwealth régime. In *Eikonoklastes* ("Image-breaker") he fell with partisan fury upon the *Eikon Basilike* ("King's Image"), allegedly the pious work of the now beheaded Charles, which sentimental reaction was investing with a dangerous popularity.<sup>23</sup> When the cause of the martyred king and his exiled son found advocates abroad, he turned to Latin, and without repining sacrificed the sight of his over-strained eyes<sup>24</sup> in preparing his laborious and almost mediocrally violent *Defense of the English People* (1651) against the learned and abusive Salmasius. His *Second Defense* (1654) is of similar nature. The excellence of its Latin gilded the arguments and barbed the personalities it contained; but it contains a justification of Milton's own career and a laudation of Cromwell and his supporters that would be resplendent in any language.

Other pamphlets in English were called forth by the political uncertainties that followed Cromwell's death in 1658. The last and most impressive was issued in several editions in the spring of 1660, when the return of the Stuarts was becoming more and more inevitable. Its title was a challenge: *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth, and the Excellence Thereof Compared with the Inconveniences and Dangers of Readmitting Kingship in This Nation*.<sup>25</sup> Milton knew how the nation was tending and spoke bold words against "this noxious humor of returning to bondage," justifying the treatment Charles I had received and begging his countrymen not to be less steadfast for liberty than the Dutch. If they allow king and bishops to return, he says,

we may be forced perhaps to fight over again all that we have fought, and spend over again all that we have spent, but are never like to attain thus far as we are now advanced to the recovery of our freedom, never to have it in possession as we now have it, never to be vouchsafed hereafter the like mercies and signal assistances from Heaven in our cause, if by our ingrateful backsliding we make these fruitless.

"Now is the opportunity," he cried in desperate appeal, "now the very season, wherein we may obtain a Free Commonwealth, and establish it

<sup>22</sup> "These were not new and revolutionary conceptions, but rather represented the continuity of the normal principles of the political theory of the Middle Ages" (A. J. Carlyle, *Political Liberty*, Oxford, 1941, p. 119). See also W. Haller, "Before *Arcopagitica*," *PMLA*, XLII (1927), 875-900.

<sup>23</sup> See W. L. Loewenhaupt, "The Writing of Milton's *Eikonoklastes*," *SP*, XX (1923), 28-51; J. S. Smart, "Milton and the King's Prayer," *RES*, I (1925), 385-391.

<sup>24</sup> See J. M. French, "The Date of Milton's Blindness," *PQ*, XV (1936), 93-94.

<sup>25</sup> Ed. E. M. Clark (New Haven, 1915).

forever in the land without difficulty or much delay." Yet the ink was hardly dry on the last issue of the pamphlet, when Charles II was brought back with uproarious plaudits and Milton became a hunted man. He was now the most conspicuous surviving enemy of the Restoration, and it is not wholly clear why he did not suffer a traitor's or a regicide's fate. He had loyal friends like Marvell, who interceded for him, and he had a name "of which all Europe talked from side to side,"<sup>26</sup> and that was a consideration of importance to Charles II's government. At any rate, fourteen more years of unobstructed life were granted him; and neither friends nor enemies nor himself could have forecast the value of those years.

<sup>26</sup> Second sonnet to Cyriac Skinner, line 12 (slightly altered).

# XV

## Milton in the Restoration

Shakespeare died at fifty-two. At the same age Milton, as a poet, was reborn; and for fourteen years more his renewed but unreconstructed genius projected itself like a Gulf Stream through the incongruous currents of the Restoration.<sup>1</sup> According to Aubrey,<sup>2</sup> he began the writing of *Paradise Lost* "about two years before the king came in," which would be shortly before Oliver Cromwell's death in September, 1658. It is not likely, though, that much was put on paper before the final, and to Milton catastrophic, settlement of 1660. The early books are too much permeated with the sense of a dire foregone decision and with the need to justify the ways of God to men to have sprung out of the chequered hopes and fears, and the immediate political urgencies, of the closing years of the Commonwealth. Milton's prose shows that at this time he was too intent upon the lost cause for which he was himself battling to have had much leisure for Satan's, and a Restoration background seems clearly implied by the vivid lines about Belial in Book 1:<sup>3</sup>

Paradise  
Lost

The Date

In courts and palaces he also reigns,  
And in luxurious cities, where the noise  
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,  
And injury and outrage; and, when night  
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons  
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.

*Paradise Lost*, first printed in 1667, took final form between the Restoration (May, 1660) and the Great Plague of 1665,<sup>4</sup> but it grew from soil that had been long since prepared. Even so far back as the Italian journey of 1639 Milton had seriously dedicated himself, as the Latin poems show, to the

<sup>1</sup> See, in addition to works cited at opening of ch. xiii, E. Greenlaw, "Spenser's Influence on *Paradise Lost*," *SP*, xvii (1920). 320-359; H. Darbishire, *The Manuscript of Paradise Lost, Book 1* (Oxford, 1931); H. J. C. Grierson, *Milton and Wordsworth, Poets and Prophets* (Cambridge, 1937); G. W. Whiting, *Milton's Literary Milieu* (Chapel Hill, 1939); E. E. Stoll, "Milton, Puritan of the Seventeenth Century" in *Poets and Playwrights* (Minneapolis, 1930), pp. 241-295, and "Milton a Romantic," *RES*, viii (1932). 1-12; Douglas Bush, *The Renaissance and English Humanism* (Toronto, 1939), ch. iv; Grant McColley, *Paradise Lost, an Account of Its Growth and Major Origins* (Chicago, 1940); Z. S. Fink, "The Political Implications of *Paradise Regained*," *JEGP*, xl (1941). 482-488; C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to 'Paradise Lost'* (Oxford, 1942); Douglas Bush, *'Paradise Lost' in Our Time* (Ithaca, 1945).

<sup>2</sup> H. Darbishire, *The Early Lives of Milton* (1932), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Lines 497-502.

<sup>4</sup> G. McColley, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-325, argues that the poem was written inconsecutively during the years 1652-1663.



*The Function of Satan*

idea of a great national epic;<sup>5</sup> but his ponderings during the next few years led him to prefer the plan of a biblical play, and by 1642 he had outlined for himself in considerable detail a tragedy on *Adam Unparadised*. Circumstances thwarted this design; and it is easy to surmise that when he returned to the subject, just as the theatres were licentiously reopening, the notion of drama, even closet drama, would have been distasteful. He laid it by in his patient and retentive brain, and framed his poem again on epic lines. Comparison with the *Adam Unparadised* outline shows that he had not intended to make so much of the cosmic and demonic interests. In particular he had not intended to make so much of Satan; but in the first books of *Paradise Lost* Satan became the glorious scapegoat to bear away Milton's own sin of impatience with the Lord, or in the jargon of psychology to "sublimate" his outraged sense of justice and the repinings of his injured pride. Satan, of course, is not Milton, and in a total view he is not the hero of the poem; but at the beginning he is the "agonist," who struggles as Milton had been struggling and reacts as nature tempted Milton to react. Professor Saurat, who says that "the hero of *Paradise Lost* is Milton himself,"<sup>6</sup> shows how the poet contends at every step against this objectivation of his own rebelliousness; and there can be no doubt that the externalizing of his inner strife did him good. He might have said with Wordsworth,

A timely utterance gave that thought relief,  
And I again am strong.<sup>7</sup>

*The Scene of Paradise Lost*

*Adam and Eve*

He might have said this at the end of the second book, for after that point the sorrows of Satan interest him much less, and his sympathies are on the side of the angels. The third book, opening with one of the most beautiful passages in his poetry, is transitional, carrying the reader, by way of heaven and the new-created universe, to the earthly paradise in which Adam and Eve dwell. This last is the real scene of Milton's poem; of the remaining books seven take place here solely, and the other two in great part. In all the last nine books the interest in Adam and Eve is paramount; even in the episodic Books v to viii, which consist mainly of Raphael's discourse to the happy pair. They are, as Milton intended them to be, the chief figures of the epic, and they are astonishingly real. One can dislike Adam for much the same reasons for which one may dislike John Milton, and charge him with being an over-sexed and priggish Puritan. One may even dislike Eve, for the reason that Milton was, as Sir Herbert Grierson has said,<sup>8</sup> "a sore, angry, intolerant, and arrogant critic of women"; but one cannot escape the moving poignancy of the characterization or fail to note that Milton has applied to Eve a great many of the most winning

<sup>5</sup> See P. F. Jones, "Milton and the Epic Subject from British History," *PMLA*, XLII (1927), 901-909; R. F. Brinkley, *Arthurian Legend in the Seventeenth Century* (Baltimore, 1932), pp. 126-141.

<sup>6</sup> *Milton, Man and Thinker* (1925), p. 220.

<sup>7</sup> *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*.

<sup>8</sup> *Cross Currents in English Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (1929), p. 155.

words that men have ever used of women or put into their mouths.<sup>9</sup> On this plane *Paradise Lost* is a religious romance, not altogether unlike *The Pilgrim's Progress*, with which through many generations it shared the affections of the humbly pious.<sup>10</sup> On another plane, and particularly in the scenes in heaven, it is a philosophy of religion, asserting man's freedom of will and ultimate responsibility for his acts. As recent critics have been pointing out, it integrates elements from the mystical Jewish *Cabbala* into a remarkably bold and consistent exposition of Christian materialism.<sup>11</sup>

The fact remains that the first two books of *Paradise Lost*, though hardly *The First Two Books* more than a colossal prelude in the total economy of the poem, are the part that most delights the modern reader. They are the most dramatically conceived, as if the poet, having long weighed the subject as a play, only slowly adopted the narrator's attitude;<sup>12</sup> and they are the richest part in a literary sense. Milton's heaven seems to us unfurnished, an echoing gallery of pure theological reason; and it could hardly be otherwise in the work of a poet who held God the Father to be wholly unknowable and indescribable. The cool delightfulness of the earthly paradise is largely vegetable, a matter of plants and flowers and charming landscapes; but in Milton's hell the human spirit is at home, for there, by skilful use of simile and anticipatory allusion, he undid his corded bales of worldwide learning, from the giant brood of Phlegra and the Pygmean race beyond the Indian mount to the sea-beast Leviathan slumbering on the Norway foam and the Tuscan artist with his optic glass. These passages are, as everybody knows, one of the peculiar glories of *Paradise Lost*.<sup>13</sup> There is little opportunity for them in the scenes in heaven, and in the later books they are likely to fall into the form of grandiose geographical surveys,<sup>14</sup> where Milton's muse follows the course of Marlowe's in *Tamburlaine*; but in the first two books they are poured out with such a lavish hand that they resemble the jewels in which Barabas counts his wealth:

Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,  
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,  
Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,  
And seld-seen costly stones of so great price.<sup>15</sup>

By identifying the fallen followers of Satan with the divinities of pagan mythology, Milton found other means of vitalizing the first two books of *Paradise Lost* through contact with the recondite fulness of his reading; but in the most dramatic scene of all, the great council in Pandemonium,

<sup>9</sup> E.g., Books iv. 639-656; viii. 500-510; ix. 309-314, 445-467; x. 914-936.

<sup>10</sup> See E. N. S. Thompson, "For *Paradise Lost*, xi-xii," *PQ*, xxii (1943). 376-382.

<sup>11</sup> See D. Saurat, *Milton et le matérialisme chrétien en Angleterre* (Paris, 1928); M. H. Nicolson, "Milton and the *Conjectura Cabbalistica*," *PQ*, vi (1927). 1-18; H. F. Fletcher, *Milton's Rabbinical Readings* (Urbana, 1930); C. C. Green, "The Paradox of the Fall in *Paradise Lost*," *MLN*, lxi (1938). 557-571; A. H. Gilbert, "The Theological Basis of Satan's Rebellion and the Function of Abdiel in *Paradise Lost*," *MP*, xl (1942). 19-42.

<sup>12</sup> See J. H. Hanford, "The Dramatic Element in *Paradise Lost*," *SP*, xiv (1917). 178-195.

<sup>13</sup> See W. Raleigh, *Milton* (1900), ch. vi.

<sup>14</sup> E.g., Books iii. 431-439; iv. 268-284; ix. 76-82; x. 431-436; xi. 385-411; xii. 135-146.

<sup>15</sup> *The Jew of Malta*, lines 25-28.

Character-  
ization in  
Paradise  
Lost

he seems to be drawing, not on learning, but on living experience. The authentic tones of real men, arguing a question of intensest actuality, are heard in the wonderfully contrasted speeches of Moloch, Belial, and Mammon. Reading Moloch's jolting and fanatical words,

My sentence is for open war; of wiles,  
More unexpert, I boast not, . . .

one may fancy that Milton had before his mind's eye Thomas Harrison, the regicide, the first victim of the Restoration, of whom Pepys wrote on October 13, 1660:

I went out to Charing Cross, to see Major-General Harrison hanged, drawn, and quartered, which was done there, he looking as cheerful as any man could do in that condition. . . . It is said that he said that he was sure to come shortly at the right hand of Christ to judge them that now had judged him, and that his wife do expect his coming again.

And reading the masterly tergiversation with which Belial replies, one assumes that Milton was thinking, as in 1659-60 every one in England was thinking, of General Monck, the "hero of the Restoration," whom Charles II rewarded with the Dukedom of Albermarle, and of whom a biographer has said:

The course of astonishing dissimulation which Monck steadily pursued from the time of his first declaration in Scotland to that of the Restoration is such as to defy all ordinary perfidy, and to rouse every sense of common honesty in array against the admiration which is due to his dexterity.<sup>16</sup>

Milton's own comment on Monck's career might have been,

For neither man nor angel can discern  
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks  
Invisible, except to God alone.<sup>17</sup>

If this seems fanciful, there can surely be little doubt whom Milton had in mind when he pictured Beëlzebub, rising to control the stampeded council:

with grave  
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seem'd  
A pillar of state; deep on his front engraven  
Deliberation sat and public care;  
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,  
Majestic though in ruin: sage he stood,  
With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear  
The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look  
Drew audience and attention still as night  
Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake.

<sup>16</sup> J. Stuart Wortley, quoted by O. Warner, *Hero of the Restoration* (1936), p. 162.

<sup>17</sup> Book III. 682 ff. The idea has been traced to Thomas Aquinas (McColley, *op. cit.*, p. 136).

*Aut Cromwell aut diabolus!* The advantage Milton had in this scene was that, beyond almost any other great poet, he had been a part of such events. "The man hath seen some majesty, and should know." To which any Cromwellian might have replied,

Hath he seen majesty? Isis else defend,  
And serving you so long!<sup>18</sup>

Nothing went to waste in Milton: neither the years expended on "all such reading as was never read," both sacred and profane; nor the years devoted to political business and controversy. The incredible naïveté and idealistic folly of his first marriage saved our "Grand Parents" from being lay figures. Milton's Eve is the artistic legacy of all the pain that Mary Powell inflicted. Hate, shame, adoration, and womanliness have hardly been blended with a more dizzying effect since Catullus wrote his *odi et amo*. Milton's blindness helped too. Light and dark are the warp and woof of which *Paradise Lost* is woven. References to light are innumerable and always exciting, from the

Bright effluence of bright essence increate,

*The Effects  
of Blindness*

which is God, through such tender subtleties as "the sweet approach of even or morn," to the "darkness visible" of hell, and also of Milton's sight-reproductive imagination. The poem develops as a series of great ocular prospects,<sup>19</sup> marvelously selective and exact, the work of a mind that has hoarded and furbished up all its visual recollections.

The superlative exquisiteness of rhythm and rhetoric in *Paradise Lost* must come from the same cause. In these respects *Comus* and *Lycidas* might have seemed to reach the zenith of art; but every reader knows that *Paradise Lost* has something more, in the varied contours of the long wave-like sentences, the vivid marquetry of the Latinisms let into the English style to brighten or to strengthen, and in the perfect matching of the figurative allusions. It is what makes *Paradise Lost* the greatest English classic, and it comes (humanly speaking) from the enforced patience of the blind man, rolling each twenty lines or so over the buffers of his most exigent taste till they acquired the polish of pebbles by the seashore. Perhaps it is a comforting thought that the special merits of *Paradise Lost* are not likely to be paralleled, because another poet, equally endowed, is not likely to be called on to pay the dreadful cost.

*Paradise Regained*, first printed in 1671, four years after *Paradise Lost*, has been always overshadowed by the greater work, though Milton, as his nephew remembered, "could not bear with patience any such thing" as the suggestion of its inferiority.<sup>20</sup> It is not an epic, being merely a semi-dramatic account, in four short books, of the commencement of Christ's ministry; and instead of opening like *Paradise Lost* in a blaze of glory, it

*Paradise  
Regained*

<sup>18</sup> *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. iii. 42 ff.

<sup>19</sup> See M. H. Nicolson, "Milton and the Telescope," *ELH*, II (1935). 1-32.

<sup>20</sup> See H. Darbishire, *The Early Lives of Milton* (1932), p. 75.

begins on the lowest key and reserves most of its magnificence for the last book. It contains many of the quietest lines that Milton wrote, and a few which are actually unmusical;<sup>21</sup> but when it soars, it reaches heights that have not often been equalled; e.g., (II. 355 ff.),

Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades  
With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,  
And ladies of th' Hesperides, that seem'd  
Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabled since  
Of fairy damsels met in forest wide  
By knights of Logres, or of Lyonesse,  
Lancelot, or Pelleas or Pellenore.

Yet this passage, which so gracefully blends Ovid and Malory, and the similar one (III. 337-343) that pays tribute to Boiardo and Ariosto are broadly characteristic only as they join with other indications of the resurgence of youthful feeling in this poem—an aspect which critics seem strangely to have ignored.

*The Style*

The style is more Homeric than that of *Paradise Lost*, as in the repeated narrative clichés; e.g.,

To whom our Saviour calmly thus replied (III. 43),  
To whom the Tempter murmuring thus replied (III. 108),  
To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd (III. 181);

and in the precise classical similes; e.g. (IV. 15 ff.),

Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time,  
About the wine-press when sweet must is pour'd,  
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;  
Or surging waves against a solid rock,  
Though all to shivers dash'd, th' assault renew,  
Vain batt'ry, and in froth or bubbles end.

There is the feeling of Homer also, though reinforced by the Elizabethan poets, in the description of dawn (IV. 426 ff.),

Thus pass'd the night so foul, till morning fair  
Came forth with pilgrim steps in amice gray;  
Who with her radiant finger still'd the war  
Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds  
And grisly spectres, which the fiend had rais'd.

The poem is essentially a debate between Christ and Satan, neither of whom is very similar to the corresponding figure in *Paradise Lost*. Satan has here, as in the Book of Job (which in several ways served Milton as a model), rather come to terms with God and been accepted as the allowed leader of the divine Opposition. The young Christ of *Paradise Regained*, though somewhat ungenial toward the Fiend, is the most charming figure in the poem. His divinity (after Milton's manner) is not greatly stressed; but his heroic humanity, ardor, and clear-eyed courage make him the perfect ex-

<sup>21</sup> E.g., Books I. 302, II. 243, IV. 597.

emplar of that ideal of magnanimity through renunciation of the world which was one of the most cherished philosophies of the time.<sup>22</sup> Galahad was in the tradition, and hardly less the young John Milton, so valiantly fastidious, who seems to speak for himself in Christ's words (l. 201 ff.):

When I was yet a child, no childish play  
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set  
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do  
What might be public good; myself I thought  
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,  
All righteous things. . . . .  
These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving  
By words at times cast forth, inly rejoic'd  
And said to me apart: High are thy thoughts,  
O son, but nourish them and let them soar  
To what highth sacred virtue and true worth  
Can raise them, though above example high.

In such passages Horton is recalled as much as Nazareth, and the bruised poet seems to be finding a sweet solace in lingering over the ideals of his youth. The most loftily sustained portion of the whole poem, the first half of Book iv, shows Satan offering a temptation not specified in the Gospel narrative, and aimed rather, it might appear, at the "Lady of Christ's" than the Man of Galilee. It contains the most vivid and winning picture ever drawn in so many English words of "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome." Of course, Christ, who will not accept bread at the tempter's hand, cannot accept from him a classical education; but there stand, all incorruptible and undefeated, the lines of radiant and rejoicing humanism:

*Christ and  
Milton*

The city which thou seest no other deem  
Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the earth, . . .

and

Behold,  
Where on the Aegean shore a city stands,  
Built nobly — pure the air and light the soil —  
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts  
And eloquence . . . ,

strangely palpitating raptures for a man of sixty.

*Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* were given to the world together in the volume of 1671, but the former is best explained as an interval-piece, thrown off during the transfer of Milton's attention from the great epic that had appeared in 1667 to the great tragedy in which his poetry found its completion. *Paradise Regained* is less intense than either, less titanic, and it mediates between the epic and the dramatic point of view. *Samson Agonistes*, on the other hand, shows Milton using all his strength, and the

*Samson  
Agonistes*

<sup>22</sup> See M. Y. Hughes, "The Christ of *Paradise Regained* and the Renaissance Heroic Tradition," *SP*, xxxv (1938). 254-277; and note by E. M. W. Tillyard, xxxvi (1939). 247-252; also T. H. Banks, "The Banquet Scene in *Paradise Regained*," *PMLA*, lv (1940). 773-776.



accumulated reflections of a lifetime, as at long last he came back to his old project of a sacred tragedy.<sup>23</sup> It is his most flawless single work of art, in which he openly challenges comparison with Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, "the three tragic poets unequaled yet by any," and in which he comes near to making his challenge good.<sup>24</sup>

As in the slighter but similar case of Milton's adoption of the Italian sonnet, criticism has seldom done justice to *Samson Agonistes*, because few critics have combined learning and imagination in a degree sufficient to understand the author's problem. Structurally, Milton's play reproduces with extraordinary precision the form of a Greek tragedy as Aristotle conceived it, and the parallel with the *Oedipus at Colonus* of Sophocles is in some details very close indeed; but the poet's mind was too fully permeated with Hellenic drama for his *Samson* to be explainable as imitation of specific plays or of a particular dramatist. His spiritual affinity is closest with Aeschylus, the strictest and sternest of the Athenian playwrights. Like Aeschylus he greatly magnifies the importance of the hero and of the chorus, who between them speak two-thirds of the lines, and like him limits the speaking characters to two in any scene. The unity and gravity of the play are also Aeschylean, but the play as a whole is not Aeschylean; it is Greek.

These things, however, wonderful and even unique though they are in a modern poem, would not make *Samson Agonistes* a vital English tragedy without the religious tone, which is not archaic but of the seventeenth century, and without the individuality of Samson's character, which is deeply Miltonic.<sup>25</sup> Like Milton, Samson is a dedicated soul,

a person rais'd  
With strength sufficient and command from Heav'n  
To free my country.

Like Milton he has been embittered by an unwise marriage, has suffered blindness, and been delivered into the hands of godless enemies; and like Milton he is grappling humbly with the problem of God's justice and the question, "Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?" This is distinctively a poem of old age, and for Milton curiously unadorned. It has little excitement, and discloses its subtle beauties only after repeated readings, for they depend on delicate psychological strains and stresses. It belongs with nothing in the Elizabethan or the Restoration age. In theme it is wholly Hebraic, in structure wholly Greek; and in effect it is the most autobiographical and (though Christ is never mentioned) the most movingly Christian thing that Milton wrote—at least since the early ode *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*.

<sup>23</sup> See E. M. Clark, "Milton's Earlier Samson," *Univ. of Texas Studies in English*, vii (1927), 144-154.

<sup>24</sup> For an admirable and very full treatment of this subject, see W. R. Parker, *Milton's Debt to Greek Tragedy in Samson Agonistes* (Baltimore, 1937); also G. L. Finney, "Chorus in *Samson Agonistes*," *PMLA*, LVIII (1943), 649-664.

<sup>25</sup> See J. H. Hanford, "Samson Agonistes and Milton in Old Age," *Univ. of Michigan Studies in Shakespeare, Milton, and Donne* (1925), pp. 167-189.

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